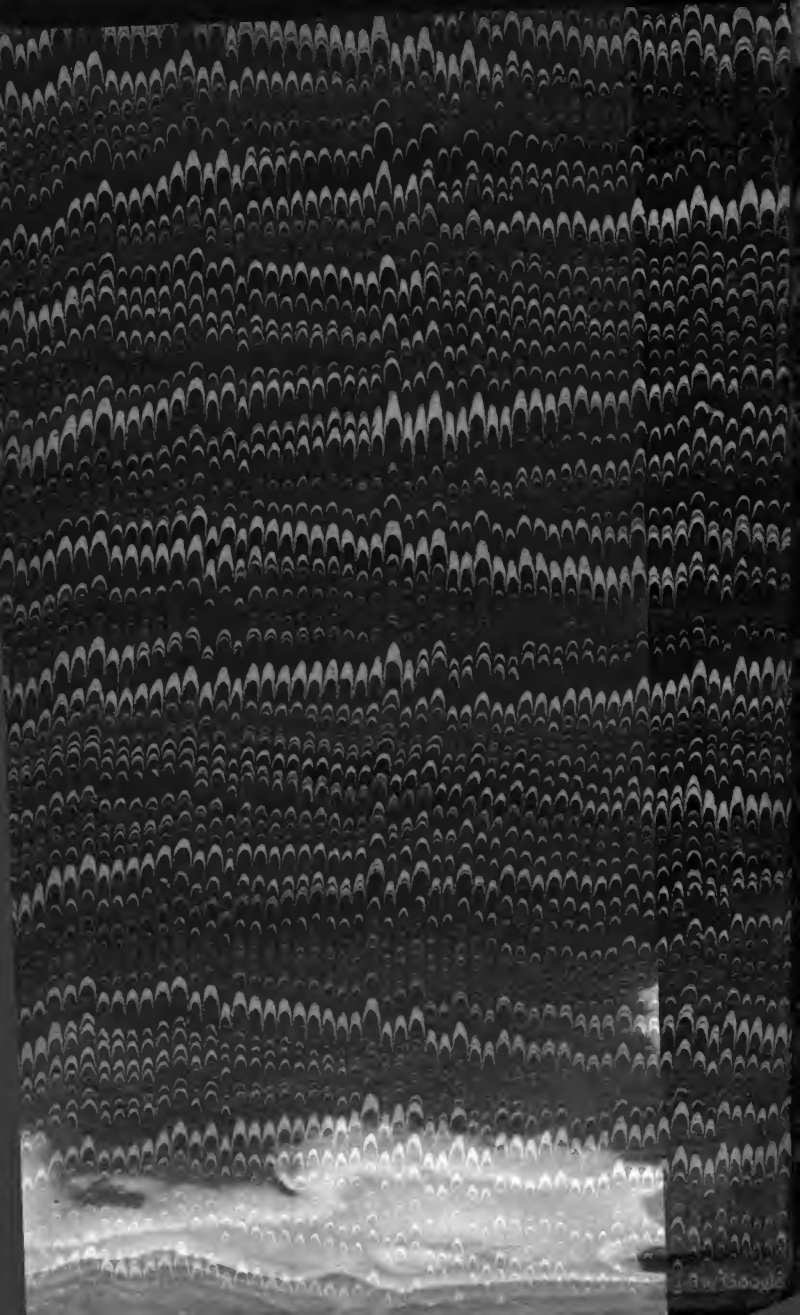
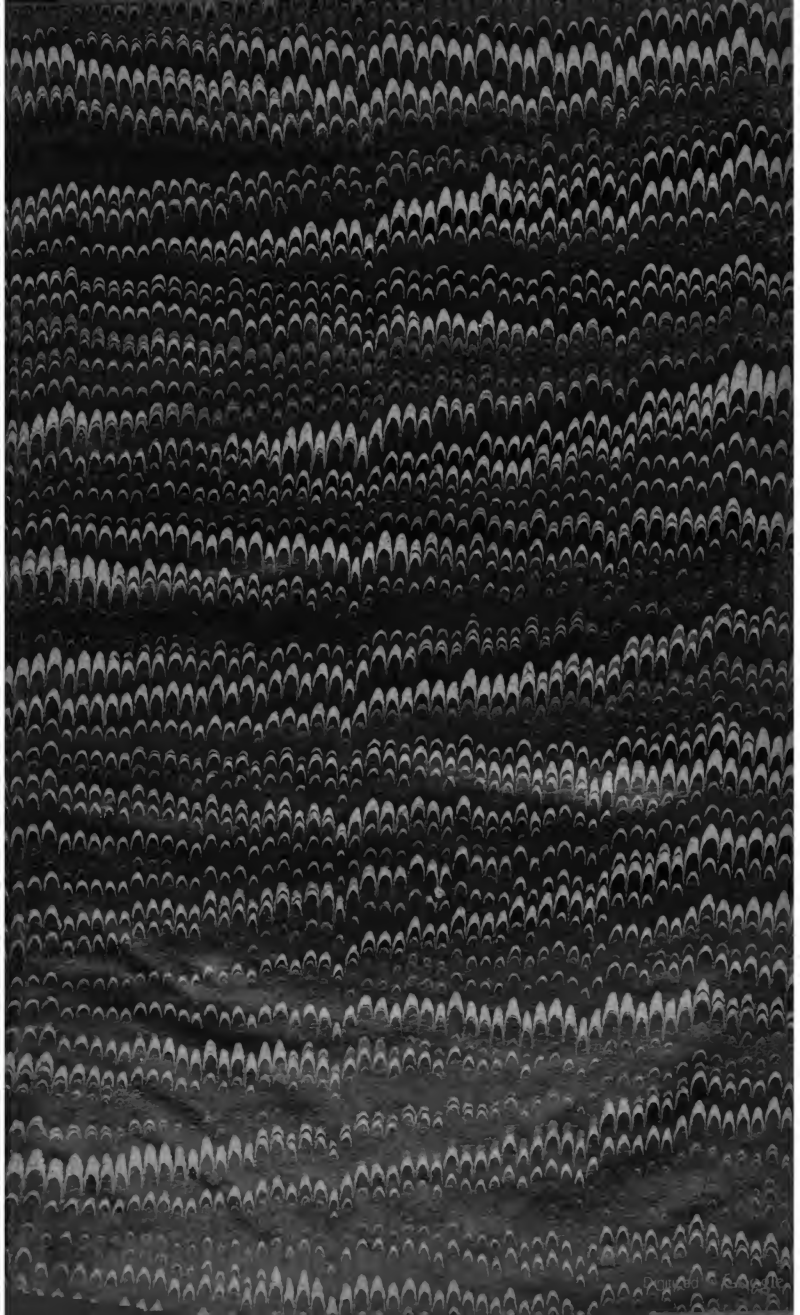
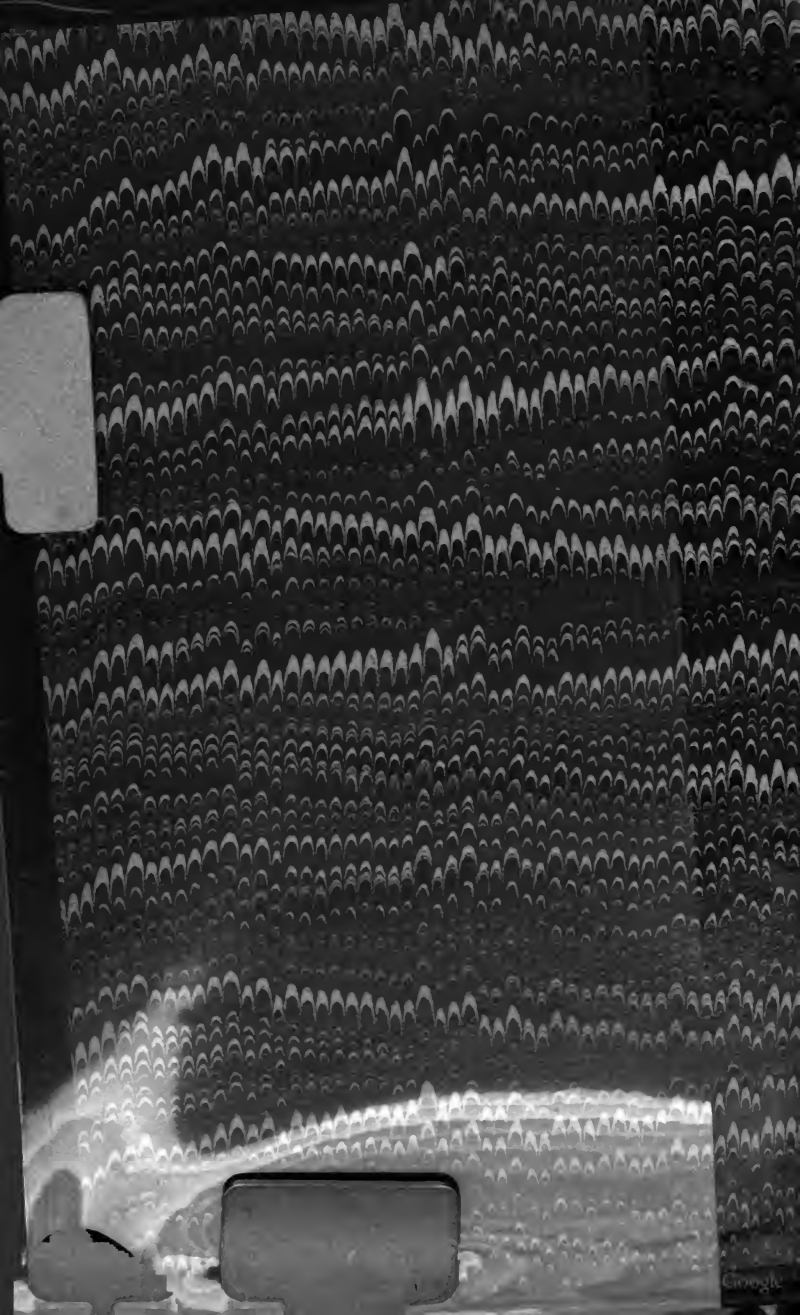
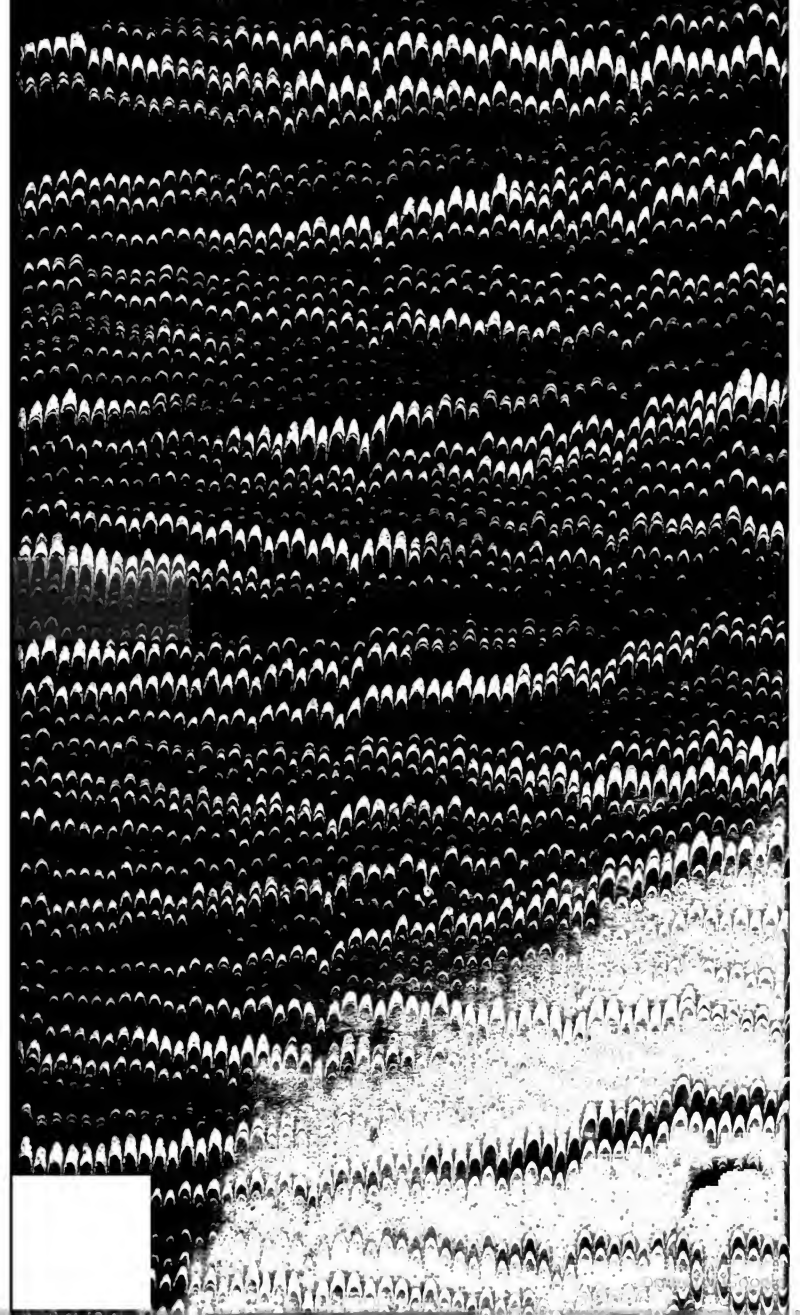
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ASCENTS

OF

MONT BLANC

BY

DR. E. CLARK AND CAPT. SHERWILL

1825-26

MR. JACKSON

1823

COLBURN'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE

1825-26

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In memory of Prof. and Mrs.
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sellors, who saw no other means of saving his honour*) were disgraced and banished from court. The great Lord Clarendon was deprived of the seals, and dismissed; and his dismissal was followed by those consequences which paved the way for the Revolution.

So much for the fair Frances Stuart. Her picture does justice to the exquisite beauty which could turn a monarch's head and revolutionize a kingdom. She appears to have been a *blonde* of the most delicate description: fair yet not insipid, her features are perfectly regular but rather deficient in expression; her hair flows loose; she holds a bow in one hand, and with the other supports her dress as if tripping over the dew. We fancy we can trace in the nymph-like figure that *air-de-parure*, which excited de Grammont's admiration, as being "truly French."

The landscape in this lovely picture is not its least charm—it is beautifully painted, and reminds us as much as Lely can do, of Rubens.

LONDON LYRICS.

The Clapham Chalybeate.

WHO has e'er been at Clapham must needs know the pond
That belongs to Sir Barnaby Sturch:
'Tis well stock'd with fish; and the Knight's rather fond
Of bobbing for tench and for perch.

When he draws up his line, to decide if all's right,
Moist drops o'er his pantaloons dribble;
Though seldom, if ever, beguiled by a bite,
He now and then boasts of a nibble.

Vulgar mud, very like vulgar men, will encroach,
Uncheck'd by the spade and the rake;
In process of time it enveloped the roach
In Sir Barnaby's Lilliput lake.

Five workmen, well arm'd, and denuded of shoes,
Now fearlessly delved in the flood;
To steal unawares on the Empress of Ooze,
And cart off her insolent mud.

The innocent natives were borne from the bog,
Eel, minnow, and toad, felt the shovel,
And lizard-like eft lay with fugitive frog
In a clay-built extempore hovel.

The men work'd away with their hands and their feet,
And delved in a regular ring:
When lo! as their taskwork was all but complete,
They waken'd a mineral spring.

"We 've found a *Chalybeate*, sir," cried the men:
"We halt till we know what your wish is"—
"Keep it safe," quoth the knight, "till you 've finish'd, and then
Throw it back with the rest of the fishes."

* Lord Clarendon, in the Continuation of his Life, gives an account of this marriage and his share in it. He suspected the King of an intention to divorce Queen Catherine, on the most shameful pretexts, in order to make way for the elevation of Miss Stuart to the throne.

FOL 16

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NARRATIVE OF AN EXCURSION TO THE SUMMIT OF MONT BLANC.

By Dr. Edmund Clark, and Captain Markham Sherwill.

August 26th, 1825.

On a beautiful serene summer evening, we walked up the hill from the town of Neuchatel to La Rochette, a charming villa overhanging the lake. Standing here on the terrace walk, surrounded with exotics of gayest tint and sweetest fragrance, we gazed for the first time on the hoary monarch of the Alps. You look down over a green vineyard, and a poplar colonnade, on the blue surface of the lake; beyond rise the green swelling hills of the opposite shore, and then, far above, the eye roams along a snowy range of Swiss and Savoy Alps, extending more than a hundred miles in the sweep of the distant horizon. The sun gradually descended behind the Jura; we watched in silence the shadow of the horizon spreading slowly upwards from peak to peak; but when all the less lofty summits were clad in sober grey, still the colossal summit of Mont Blanc remained conspicuous, like a bright cloud detached from the earth, and glowing with a warm roseate light in the last rays of sunset. The first view of this splendid panorama is certainly one of the strongest, most expansive, and most delicious sensations of life. The illuminated dome of St. Peter's, as seen on a still night from the Pincian hill, brilliant and majestic as it is, has yet nothing like that deep impressive hold upon the memory. If we were looking for a simile to convey some faint notion of this peculiar glow of the mountain at sunset, might we not feebly express it by saying, that you seem to look at a huge hill of Bologna Phosphorus glowing with mitigated light on a cloudy day?

Approaching Geneva near Malagny, a delightful abode, but more celebrated from the fame of the elegant Author who inhabits it, we again enjoyed this gorgeous spectacle. Very many times in our evening promenades about the lake of Geneva and its lovely environs, we saw the Mont Blanc at sunset, but never do I recollect to have seen it tinged with so deep a ruby glow as on that evening. To observe it more attentively, we alighted, ran up through a vineyard, and gazed in silent admiration, till by an insensible gradation of tints a bright ruby red had cooled into a deep violet scarcely less beautiful. At the end of August 1824, we took up our quarters at the excellent Hotel de l'Union, at Chamouni, close to the base of the mountain. The weather, however, proved unpropitious; and having waited several days, during which all the high summits were covered with incessant mist, we mounted our mules on the 26th of August, and prepared to quit the valley by the Col-de-Balme. On approaching the summit of the passage, however, the thick vapours suddenly burst away, and, to our infinite satisfaction, displayed the immense colossal form of the white giant lifting his hoary head in awful majesty, and claiming his rightful reverence as indisputable sovereign of European hills. We lingered long, feasting our eyes with this most sublime spectacle: the huge Dome-du-Goûté, and the vast slopes of snow, glittered like silver in the glorious burst of sunshine. At last we turned away to pursue our route to Martigny, little anticipating that by mere accidental coincidence, on that very day twelvemonth, we should be quietly perched on the loftiest pinnacle of Mont Blanc, and gazing down from a height, from which the summit of the Col-de-Balme, though far more elevated than any British mountain, should appear an insignificant eminence.

From the spire of Milan Cathedral, you see the Monte Rosa, but I think not the Mont Blanc; certainly we saw it not. While crossing the noble river Po, we took a long farewell to the Alps, then of a deep violet tinge in the closing evening; they were soon hid by the intervening Apennines. After the interval of a year, we again joyfully hailed our old hoary acquaintance from the heights of the Superga above Turin, and some time after again took

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up our abode at the Hotel de l'Union, decidedly one of the best inns on the Continent.

During a conversation at Geneva, in which allusion had been made to the disastrous attempt of Dr. Hamel, in 1820, it had been deeply impressed on my mind that to hazard the experiment contrary to the advice of the experienced guides, would not only be childish contemptible temerity, but a base and selfish trifling with human life. My first visit was therefore directed to the bureau of the chief Guide, the excellent Monsieur Simon. I begged this worthy and brave man to give me his unqualified judgment as to the present practicability of the ascent, promising to acquiesce implicitly in his decision whatever that might be. Monsieur Simon's reply was nearly this: "When the weather is favourable, I for my own part should like nothing better than to form one of the party. When I was a young man, I made the attempt, but we did not succeed. Since that time having married, I have not renewed the experiment, simply from unwillingness to disoblige my family." That objection not directly applying, the next enquiry of Monsieur Simon was, how soon it might be proper to ascend? but his answer was less satisfactory. He said that at present the matter was impracticable, inasmuch as they had had some recent fall of snow on the upper parts of the mountain, which would require several days of continued sunshine to harden it. Monsieur Simon engaged to let me know as soon as the weather should appear sufficiently settled, and in the mean time recommended several preparatory mountain excursions both to ascertain the physical strength in hand, and to augment the stock for the time of trial. Monsieur Seringe, of Geneva, had strongly warned me against attempting so long a journey on the snow without much previous exercise. My friend had been much accustomed to alpine marches in his botanizing excursions; he spoke therefore from experience. No man can walk from thirty to forty miles on ice and snow without suffering, until he is slowly habituated to the exertion; and the very numerous unsuccessful efforts to ascend Mont Blanc have probably been occasioned rather by inattention to this circumstance, than by any other cause. Of all the attempts made, only eleven had hitherto succeeded, and of these eleven, five parties were of our own countrymen.

In obedience to the advice of M. Simon we set out early on a beautiful summer morning, ascended the Montanvert, descended to the Mer-de-Glace, traversed its whole length, and dined on the celebrated Jardin, certainly one of the loftiest in the globe: it is in itself merely a small pyramidal islet of grass and flowers inclosed on all sides by a sea of ice and snow; but the point of view is sublime beyond words to express it. Nor did we feel much fatigue or inconvenience of respiration, although the elevation is nearly nine thousand feet, and thus much superior to that of Vesuvius, the Rhigi, the Furka, the Grimsel, the St. Gothard, or the Grand St. Bernard, the loftiest spots we had hitherto reached. In Pictet's excellent "Itineraire," the distance from Chamouni to the Jardin is rated at seven hours fifteen minutes, which at the ordinary rate of a league an hour, would make in going and returning twenty-eight miles and a-half on the ice, and forty-three and a-half in all. This is evidently far too much: we conjectured the whole distance to be perhaps less than thirty miles, and on the ice possibly about fifteen. In traversing the plains of ice, we found great advantage from the use of double-headed ice-screws fixed into the heel of the shoe; these gave us great security and firmness, both in walking and leaping the chasms, and no traveller should neglect this simple precaution.

So invigorating is the high mountain air, aided by the strong stimulus of sublime and perfectly novel scenery, that on returning we were very little fatigued; and in the evening, by starlight, I walked about five miles to and from the Hameau des Pelerins, to examine a barometer possessed by Marie Coutet, one of our guides to the Jardin. We found it to be an excellent instrument, made by Monsieur Gourdon of Geneva, and presented to Coutet by Mr. Frederick Clissold, who ascended so successfully in 1822. We spent

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some time in examining it, and going over the little manipulations. Hitherto it had never mounted to the summit, and it was resolved that should the weather continue steady enough to admit of our ascent, Coutet should go with us. The finding so excellent an instrument at Chamouni, was a very high gratification. On inquiring at Geneva of my friend Monsieur Gautier, the professor of astronomy, where the best mountain barometers might be purchased, he gave me the address of M. Gourdon. He was not then at Geneva, but after some difficulty I found him at his country-house near Carouge. M. Gourdon was so obliging as to go over the little processes of observation with me, but unluckily he had no barometer by him, in which the mercury would descend low enough to measure the Mont Blanc, and he said there would not be time to make one. This munificent present of Mr. Clissold to Coutet was certainly a very strong inducement to hire him as our guide; but he did not at first seem exceedingly desirous of ascending, and said with a blunt good-natured smile, that he imagined we should all find a ramble to the Grands Mûlets, and down again, quite sufficient. Coutet, however, finally consented to go, should we continue to desire it. About 10 o'clock Julien Devouassou, one of the guides, returned with me to the inn, as there was no moon, and a sudden mountain torrent had torn up the road, and covered the plain with sand and granite blocks. This day was altogether exceedingly delightful, and we began to feel sanguine of success, and anxiously desirous to make the experiment. The following morning, however, had altered the scene: the glittering chain of gigantic peaks had disappeared: all was one thick mass of cloud and dense fog in the morning. Towards noon the sun again appeared, and we seized the opportunity to ascend La Flegère, a mountain opposed to the Mer-de-Glace, and affording a noble prospect of it and the surrounding needles. Superb as this view is, to us it was less interesting in some degree than the following day's ramble to the summit of the Breven. We had then a beautifully clear morning, and having provided ourselves with a telescope, could very distinctly see and examine the state of the ice and snows on the Mont Blanc. The guides concluded, after a careful and anxious survey, that the Glacier beneath the Grands Mulets would be found unusually cracked and fissured; and this judgment we afterwards found to be correct. In the evening of this day the weather once more changed: some snow fell on the higher mountains, and the worthy "Guide Chef" gave us very little hope of the possibility of trying the ascent during this season. Nothing is more uncertain than the climate of Chamouni; when we had quite lost all courage, the sky on a sudden resumed its clearness, and on one of the most heavenly mornings possible, without a single streak or cloud, we set off on mules to ascend the Buet, the highest mountain in this part of the chain, after the Mont Blanc. The elevation is nearly 9480 feet French. We were on the snow about four hours in ascending, and two in descending, and, on the whole, seven in going up and five in coming down. It is to be observed that we had good mules nearly to the verge of the snow, yet I believe the journey had never before been accomplished in so short a space of time. Pictet makes the distance eleven hours: that would make, at the common calculation of a league an hour, no less than sixty-six miles in going and returning. We conjectured that it might be between thirty-five and forty miles.

I had the great pleasure, on this excursion, to accompany a medical gentleman, son of a distinguished physician in London, himself as urbane, and I trust one day to be as successful, as his excellent father. He had recently passed over land from India, and we talked of the torrid sands of Arabia while plodding along the eternal snows of the Alps. The whole day proved quite delightful. The clearness of the sky, the amazing extent and wildness of the prospect, the amusing *glissades* down slopes of snow twice the height of the Monument, the feeling of augmenting muscular strength, and above all, the conversation of so agreeable a companion, rendered this one of the pleasantest rambles I ever enjoyed. To have ascended Mont

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Blanc in the train of so acute an observer, would have given me the highest satisfaction; and had the chief Guide thought it prudent to set out immediately on the expedition, I believe that pleasure would have been afforded: but on calm consultation, Monsieur Simon, could not consent that we should set out until the weather was more fixed. Peculiar circumstances compelling my intelligent friend to quit the valley, I gave up all hope of a companion. Before leaving Geneva, I had taken considerable pains to ascertain whether any attempt would be made this season; but, though several rumours were abroad, I heard of none definite. It was at one time reported currently, that the ladies who so successfully passed the Col-du-Géant in 1822, would return to Chamouni, to ascend Mont Blanc this season; and it was clearly desirable that before these courageous travellers hazarded the attempt, some other party should precede them, and report the state of the passage. It is self-evident, that if this desire to show respect to the fair was not a paramount motive, it certainly ought to have been; and perhaps in a certain sense and to a certain degree it was so. Desirous to improve the present fine weather, I proposed to Monsieur Simon, and the five guides selected, that we should set out on Wednesday morning, the 24th of August. Coutet and Julien consented; but the prudent and kind Monsieur Simon strongly urged the propriety of waiting one more day, that the new snows might be more firmly agglutinated to the old. Although much afraid at the time that the weather might again change, and so the whole design be eventually frustrated by the delay, yet in the issue I had the greatest reason to rejoice at it for several reasons, principally because to it I owed the pleasure of a most agreeable companion, to whose steadiness and calm persevering courage the pleasure and ultimate success of the attempt are in a great measure to be ascribed. On Wednesday the 24th, when our arrangements were pretty nearly completed for starting on the following morning, Captain Markham Sherwill, whom I had not previously the honour to know, arrived at Chamouni, and, finding Marie Coutet at liberty, ascended with him to the Mer-de-Glace. Immediately on returning to the inn, Captain Sherwill proposed to join in the expedition. I thought it but fair to mention to him what had been commonly said of the necessity of preparatory mountain courses, but, having been long inured to severe pedestrian exercise, Captain Sherwill conceived this training to himself unnecessary. Our private arrangements were soon terminated: we resolved to hire two additional guides, and agreed, in case either of us should find it desirable to return, it should then be considered fair and honourable, that the other should take four of the seven guides and proceed onwards. It was resolved farther, that a certain salary should be paid the guides if we succeeded only in reaching the Grands Mulets, about half way up, another higher sum if we reached the Grand Plateau, a third price if we mounted to the Petit-Mulet, and the full honorarium only on condition of our entire success by gaining the utmost pinnacle and re-descending in safety.

These preliminaries adjusted, we sallied out to procure the two additional guides. This, however, was no easy matter: of the forty guides enrolled at Chamouny, not more than half would by any pecuniary temptation be induced to think of the ascent; and of those who were disposed to go, the greater part were already engaged, there being an unusual press of travellers at that time in the valley. Some English gentlemen, and among others, the Reverend Parker Voules, materially assisted us in this matter. The deliberation and adjustment of the list of guides was the most painful part of the whole preparatory business: it was impossible not to feel that, in writing down the name of a guide on a scrap of paper, you might unintentionally be doing him an injury. At last, however, the affair was finally arranged. I had already frequently debated with the guides on the best mode of dividing the journeys. At first I had proposed to sleep on the Rocher Rouge the first night, that we might have abundance of time to spare upon the summit, and arrive there fresh and vigorous: this motion, however, was unanimously

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rejected; and the opinion quite decisive that the nights were now too long and too cold to think of sleeping at so great an elevation. Even Coutet declared that nothing whatever should tempt him to renew so hazardous an experiment. The next proposition was to encamp for the night on the commencement of the Grand Plateau, leaving the ascent of La Côte, that is, the steep slope towards the Rocher Rouge, till the morning. To this plan Coutet was less averse, and I was exceedingly solicitous to bring over the other guides to the same opinion; but our guide Julien strongly opposed the motion, even declaring that, if we were to advance beyond the Grands Mulets, he must beg to be excused from joining the party. I have not the least doubt that Julien spoke from a strong conviction of the necessity of this measure; for he proved himself, on trial, an intrepid and very attentive guide; yet I was much disconcerted by his refusal, and am now decidedly convinced that no traveller should once think of sleeping on the Grands Mulets the first night. To do so is to incur no trifling danger. With the finest possible weather and the utmost exertion, we found it no very easy task to reach the summit and return before night. A shower of rain, or the most trifling accident, would have proved rather serious. Having found, however, so much difficulty in mustering the requisite number of guides, it was clear either that the journey must be entirely abandoned, or the manner of prosecuting it left entirely to their direction. After much discussion, therefore, we consented to encamp the first night on the Grands Mulets rocks, and Coutet repeated his waggish suggestion that we should probably next morning quietly walk down again; a termination of the voyage which he said had happened to him on very many occasions before. Dr. Paccard, the medical gentleman who first ascended Mont Blanc, and still resides at Chamouni, was good enough to show me the *crampons* which he used in that expedition; but I thought the ice-screws far simpler and better. Our obliging hosts the Messrs. Charlets, were constantly active in preparing provisions, wine, &c. and their sister, the excellent Madame Simond, with a maternal kindness which I shall not easily forget, first scolded us soundly for thinking of the excursion, and then set to work to provide every little comfort she could possibly procure or manufacture. Gaiters, warm hose, spencer, strings for one's hat, fruit, spare veils, &c. &c.:—under her friendly auspices nothing was overlooked. It now only remained to make proper dispositions in case of any unfortunate occurrence, and then to take a few hours slumber to wind up the machinery for the exertions of the ensuing day.

Thursday, 25th August.—Waked at five o'clock, with news of a delightful morning; dressed as usual, putting on a pair of shoes with large pyramidal nails, and a pair of strong gaiters made for the occasion, and lined with Chamois leather. Descending to the room below, we found our party of guides leisurely despatching breakfast. There reigned a tolerable share of gravity in all faces. They seemed very little disposed to hurry, probably thinking the quarters below fully equal to the quarters above; and we had abundant time to reach the Grands Mulets before dark.* The provisions were now all ready and packed. We took twenty-one bottles of Vin ordinaire, one bottle of Cognac brandy, one bottle of vinegar, one toupelle of syrup, two of sirop de vinaigre, two bottles of old Neuchatel wine, two bottles of claret, seven loaves, five pounds of cheese, two pounds and a half of sugar and lemons, three pounds of raisins and prunes, some candles, nine cold fowls, eight joints of veal and mutton.

* Saussure has well remarked the inconvenience of arriving too early at an Alpine hotel. "Sur les montagnes dégagées de neiges et dont la hauteur n'excede pas 1000 à 1200 toise, il est très agréable d'arriver de bonne heure à son gîte. Mais dans les montagnes très-élevées et couvertes de neiges, ces fins de journée sont extrêmement pénibles: on ne sait où se tenir; si l'on reste tranquille, on est transi de froid; et la fatigue, jointe à la rareté de l'air, vous ôte la force et le courage de vous échauffer par l'exercice."—Saussure, Voyage dans les Alpes, tom. iv. p. 165.

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These provisions were all packed in havresacs, and sent on by by porters to the edge of the glacier, where we were to breakfast. These porters the guides thought proper to hire themselves, that they might be less embarrassed in ascending the base of the mountain, and be ready to embark on the ice with unimpaired vigour.

About five minutes after seven we mounted our two mules, and bade farewell to our friends and a numerous circle of the old guides who had assembled to see us set out. Among others, the fine vigorous old man Jaques Balmat, the original guide who accompanied Dr. Paccard in the first successful ascent. Our excellent landlord bade us good-bye with the most cordial wishes for our success; and the kind-hearted Madame Simond shook us by the hand with tears in her eyes, repeating frequently that she had not given her consent to the thing.

We left the hotel accompanied by the following seven guides on foot:—

1. Joseph Marie Coutet, aged 33, married, 1 child. Had been to the summit six times, was nearly killed by the avalanche in 1820.
2. Simeon Devouassou, aged 30, married, 1 child. Once.
3. Pierre Tairraz le jeune, aged 38, single. Once.
4. Julien Devouassou, aged 36, married, 3 children. Never. Nearly killed by the avalanche in 1820.
5. Pierre Joseph Simond, aged 37, married, 1 child. Never.
6. Simon Tournier, aged 28, single. Never.
7. Michel Devouassou, aged 26, married, 2 children. Never.*

Immediately crossed over the bridge of the Arve, and then along the left bank of the river by the mule road, through fields of hemp, corn, flax, &c. Passed over the waste of sand and granite blocks, which had utterly devastated our honest guide Julien's little farm. At half-after seven arrived at our captain Coutet's *châlet*, in the Hameau des Pelerins, and dismounted to examine the barometers and compare the scales. The excellent instrument we were to take with us here in the shade stood at 25 inches, 1 line 1-tenth, French measure. Thermometer of barometer, 14° Reaumur in the shade. Thermometer of external air, the same.

With this we carefully compared another barometer, which was to be left behind; and David Coutet, brother of Marie Coutet, was appointed to examine the instruments at appointed times, while we were above. Coutet put on his close hussar jacket and wide coarse straw hat, bade a hasty adieu to his *cara sposa*, and then in a trice we were all under weigh for the hill side.

As we began to ascend by a little common, close to the Hameau des Pelerins, Julien walked close to my mule, and said, half serious, half smiling,—"Je vous assure, Monsieur, que nous avons tous bien prié hier au soir." Crossed a little rivulet, then entered a pleasant wood of firs, and soon, emerging from the pine wood, commenced a steep winding passage among the mountain shrubs. On our right hand we had the edge of the long white Glacier des Buissons, on our left the stream from the Cascade des Pelerins. This path gradually led upward to the last patch of cultivation surrounding Favret's cottage, the Châlet de la Part. It was now half after eight o'clock, with a beautiful blue sky above. Sitting on the mule, as we halted a few minutes to rest the guides, the prospect was perfectly delightful. At the north-eastern extremity of the valley before us, rose the lofty green passage of the Col-de-Balme; then came the red craggy thunder-smitten pinnacles of the Aiguilles Rouges (the Acroceraunia of the valley); then, directly opposite to us, the long pine woods and bare broken summit of the Breven; then turning a little round, the bold calcareous turrets of the calcareous Aiguille de Varens, partly covered by a low mass of white cloud. Then came the green hills of

* Throughout this narrative, we have generally followed the spelling adopted by De Saussure, in preference to any other.

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the Prarion and the Col de Voza closing the other end of the valley of Chamouni. Looking directly downwards, you saw under your feet the dark pine woods at the base of the mountain, intersected by the white stony torrent that had burst itself several channels to join the Arve. Then, farther on, numerous brown châlets dispersed irregularly among the parallelograms of yellow corn, or green hemp, or flax, or clover. A little farther the clustered village of Chamouni, and the bright tin-covered spire of the church. Turning your back on the village, and rising a little from the valley, you saw a long line of tall thick dark-green pines forming a most beautiful back-ground to the white icy pinnacles of the rugged Glacier des Buissons, which projects far down into the smiling vale beneath. Then, higher up, you found above you the Aiguille du Goûté, and the huge bulk of the Dôme-du-Goûté shining like polished silver in the morning sun; and still higher, and directly over head, the snowy pinnacles of the monstrous Aiguille du Midi; its base covered with ice, and lower down with moss, heath, juniper, rhododendron, &c.

Very anxiously we examined the white masses of cloud in the distant horizon. A few wild streaks, like those which seamen call the grey mare's tail, were judged to indicate opposite currents of air; and on subsequently consulting the meteorological journal, kept in the convent of the Grand St. Bernard, we found this opinion confirmed. At present the vent du Nord prevailed, but there was some apprehension that the vent du Midi might return and bring bad weather.

Alighted from our mules, and entered the last human habitation we were to pass, the châlet of honest Favret. The good old man was not at home; but a pleasing young woman, I believe his daughter, gave us some excellent goat's milk. There were two females busy in their domestic cares; a wood fire burning against the side of the mountain, which seemed to form one wall of the cottage; over this fire was a monstrous black kettle, suspended on a cumbrous wooden crane, for boiling milk, making cheese, &c. The roof sloped rapidly down, supported on low walls of uncemented stone, and a projection of the same roof covered a goats' shed, which was but slightly separated from the dwelling-room. In a corner were one or two rude bedsteads, with some chamois' skins and old clothes, forming a bed. Near the fire was an old tripod stool; I think the only article of sedentary furniture. The smoke found its way out of the holes in the roof as it liked best; and nearly over the fire was a black smoky shelf, supporting several masses of that inferior white cheese, called Serac. Our goat's milk was brought in coarse black earthenware bowls, with double handles. It was deliciously cool and fresh, being kept out of the cottage in a little dairy, with a small stream of water trickling through it. Having finished our milk, we bade adieu to our young hostess, who wished us success with a smile of the greatest good-nature. The mules scrambled nimbly forward from rock to rock; for there began now to be very scanty vestige of path. Julien showed us the spot at which he had nearly perished from drinking a small quantity of sulphuric acid, which had been put up by mistake among the provisions, as syrup of vinegar, in Dr. Hamel's expedition, 1820. Julien, however, recovered his strength sufficiently to continue his march, was present at the fatal avalanche, and a second time very narrowly escaped destruction.

About a quarter before ten o'clock we quitted the mules at a sort of semi-artificial dwelling, called La Pierre Pointue. It is a kind of stone tent, formed of a vast block on one side, and a wall of uncemented stone on the side next the glacier. The mouth is open; but when once within, you are tolerably snug. Here the solitary goatherd and part of his flock find occasional shelterfrom the pelting storm and biting blast.

The road being no longer at all practicable for mules, we sent them back, with pencil notes to our friends below, by the hand of a fine ruddy smiling child of the mountains, who said her name was Dorothée Favret. Advancing rapidly on foot, we passed by a narrow goat-track, among rhododendron

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shrubs overhanging a steep acclivity, almost a precipice, of several hundred feet. There was, however, no considerable danger, if you were a little cautious in placing your feet. At a quarter before eleven we reached the extreme edge of vegetation, and were on the verge of the broad *moraine* of stones that skirt the glacier. Here we were not sorry to find the porters already arrived with the baggage and breakfast; and we all sat down in the shade of a huge block, fallen from the Aiguille du Midi, called Pierre de l'Echelle, because the ladder used in crossing the glacier was formerly placed there. This ladder, however, was not there at present; but had been left on the Grands Mulets rocks in an unsuccessful attempt last summer, having been found more inconvenient than useful in the passage. The important materials were hastily unpacked; two napkins spread for us upon a rock; some water, brought from a stream of melted ice, that fell by the edge of the glacier, was handed up in a great black copper saucepan; and a few wine-bottles were uncorked. We sat down to breakfast, all under the due influence of the keen mountain air. As we sat munching very diligently, loud rumbling shocks were heard from time to time among the ice before us; and every now and then the long distant roar of an avalanche. The summit of the Breven appeared to be about on a level with us; and upon its top we could distinctly see several travellers who had ascended to watch our progress; and with our telescope we made out their signal to us—a hat placed on a baton, which we hastened to answer by a counter-signal. The round snowy top of the Buet now reared itself above the line of the Aiguilles Rouges. Beneath, in the distance, we watched the deep bed of the Arve, till it wound round and plunged from sight into a dark fir-covered ravine. A little higher up, we distinctly made out part of the stream that runs down to form the lovely Cascade de Chêde.

When we had been some time at rest, I was desirous of examining the rate of the pulse; and found the pulse of one of the oldest porters, Coutet le Chamois, to beat eighty-four; our Captain Coutet, eighty-four; my own, eighty-eight; the guide, Simeon Devouassou, ninety-two; Pierre Tairraz *le jeune*, one hundred and two; and Captain Sherwill, one hundred and eight. This result surprised me a good deal; I had expected to find the pulse of the strongest and most muscular subjects least accelerated. This, however, did not appear to be the case. Pierre Tairraz *le jeune*, a young Hercules in figure and muscle, had a pulse fourteen beats quicker than my own; yet the observation was made with care, and I have no doubt of its accuracy.

While we were finishing our breakfast, Julien amused himself with firing a pistol, that we might hear the echo, which, however, was not remarkable: and probably the concussion helped to accelerate an avalanche, which fell some time after at this spot. At last, we all got to the end of a pretty substantial breakfast—a laughable contrast to our more delicate *déjeûner* of the following morning.

The sky still looked a little hazy in the horizon; but the guides seemed sanguine; and the opinion was general, that the desired north wind would continue. Our eye was now fixed on the dark rocks of the Mont Maudit, embedded in snowy steeps; and beneath them, upon the long black ridge of the Grands Mulets, our present goal, resembling a small narrow islet in the wide expanse of ice and snow.

All was now bustle and business. The baggage was hastily re-arranged; the great coats, blankets, sacks, sheets, bottles, loaves, &c. repacked; the great black copper *casserole* depending gallantly from a knapsack; the telescope and barometer swung, &c. All being ready, the porters bade us good-bye and prepared to descend. One of them, however, begged hard to join the upland party, and the guides were desirous that he should go, in order to lessen the proportion of baggage to each. This old man was Coutet *le Chamois* (no relation of our Captain Coutet): he had been a crystal-hunter, and had acquired the appellation of *le Chamois* from his dexterity and courage in precipitous passages. Old Coutet said he had once been alone to the summit of Mont

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Blanc, and had come down to Chamouni at eight in the evening, having left the top at noon. He said that the snows were then very good, and that he slid down the frozen slopes with his *baton*, going swift as lightning, "comme la foudre," as he expressed it. This report of his solitary ramble was received with a sly shrug by the other guides, and evidently held to be a little apocryphal. However, at the old man's strong request, it was determined that he should join our party, and receive a proportionate compensation.

As we had now only a small space before leaving terra firma and entering on the ice, I took off the shoes used in ascending the mountain, and put on a thicker pair, made for the occasion, well furnished with double-headed ice-screws. These I had kept in reserve, fearing to wear down, on the hard granite, the points of the screws. In leaping a chasm, or passing on its edge, a bent or faulty screw might easily induce a final slip.

In a few minutes we had crossed the *moraine* of granite blocks, and (perhaps with a little more anxiety than we cared to display) abandoned solid mother-earth, and embarked on the troubled ocean of ice. The first half-hour served at once as a tolerable specimen and a useful *apprentissage*. Having scarcely advanced two hundred yards, we found ourselves involved in a labyrinth of icy walls, from fifteen to thirty feet high, and separated by chasms of unknown depth. The ice-axe was presently heard in active operation, as the leading guide had to try the solidity of the tottering bridges, or to cut footsteps where the walls were too steep to be ascended without. In scaling these slippery barriers, we mounted from hole to hole, and from crag to crag, sometimes climbing on hands and knees, at other times gratefully receiving the end of a staff or the handle of the ice-axe, to assist in mounting to a ledge of ice, overhanging a chasm of no very inviting aspect. This kind of scrambling march was much more laborious, and more dangerous withal, than any thing we had seen in our other mountain rambles; but the constant assistance of the guides prevented our feeling any very serious apprehensions: it was, however, necessary to keep a good deal on the alert, to mind your footing, and to avoid looking into the chasms as much as possible. We were all quite silent, only attending to the immediate business in hand. It soon became very evident that our additional guide, Coutet le Chamois, had overrated his remaining strength. So far from being able to assist us, it was found necessary to assist him; yet the spirited old mountaineer insisted to the last that he was perfectly able to bear the fatigue. The negative voice however was general, and with much difficulty he was at last persuaded to renounce an enterprise not suited to his advancing age. Julien kindly accompanied him a little way back, to give him a hand in descending a steep crag we had with difficulty scaled, and we lost sight of Coutet's old slouched hat, as he gaily leapt off an icy wall to regain the rocks. There was much to admire in the natural feeling and delicacy with which the younger guides begged the old man to return: you heard no rude jesting; no unfeeling laughter; but only such kind and soothing expressions as these, in patois, "Mon pauvre Coutet, (Te un pou troue vieux)* Je crois que tu es un très peu trop vieux:—(Tou cre d'etre tira quand tirias thune) Tu te crois etre tel que tu as été autrefois:—(Il sera trou poynible per te) Il sera trop pénible pour toi:—(Mon pauvre ami, Ta detha assez fait) Tu as déjà assez fait,"—and similar kind expostulations. This considerate and amiable *douceur* was particularly remarkable in my worthy friend Simeon, and it alone convinced me that he would turn out a brave man. Feeling implicit confidence in his direction, I selected him as my personal guide, and his unwearied attention, his calm courage, and persevering exertion, contributed most materially to the pleasure and the safety of our excursion. Expecting very much from Simeon, I was not disappointed, and felt increasingly convinced, from his conduct, that respect for superior years is a sure indication of moral health. He that venerates not the hoary

* The patois is never written, I believe; but this orthography will convey the sounds pretty accurately. Speaking to one another, the guides frequently use this jargon. It is so like French that, by degrees, you can understand even their confidential remarks.—Our Captain Contet spoke also a little Italian.

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head with all its little infirmities, is destitute of some of the heart's best emotions, and his own old age shall be void of honour.

Coutet le Chamois having now returned, his share of the baggage was distributed among the original seven guides, and the party again set forward, steering as directly as possible towards the Grands Mulets; very rarely, however, could we advance in a straight line, the course being incessantly traversed by crêvices and chasms, from a few inches to twenty-five or thirty feet in width and generally of fearful depth: we were therefore obliged to wind backward and forward to seek the safest passages. Marie Coutet, Simeon, Julien and Pierre Tairraz, were constantly a-head, sometimes widely separated from one another in their perilous office of reconnoitring the chasms. We had not yet put on our ropes, so that the leading guides were occasionally in situations where one slip would have been certain death. It was not very comfortable to see the foremost man, with an axe in his hand and a heavy sack on his back, silently stepping along the ridge of a narrow wall of ice, with a blue chasm some two hundred or three hundred feet deep, gaping on each side of him. It was, moreover, not precisely agreeable to have the same operation to do yourself; though, when the footsteps have been cut with the ice-axe, and you are sure of assistance to direct and steady you in the passage, the danger is by no means so great to the traveller as to the guide: these brave mountaineers, however, were generally gay and cheerful, appearing only solicitous for our safety. I think, another time it would be much more prudent to put on the ropes immediately on entering the glacier, and to beg it as a favour of the guides, that they would do so too.

Cautiously and slowly we advanced, often hardly able to divine in what way we could possibly proceed ten yards; so completely were we hemmed in at times by perpendicular walls of ice. At one place we found ourselves deep down in a sort of icy crack, with so steep a wall before us that for some time the mode of exit was wholly a mystery; and at last we thought ourselves extremely happy in discovering a beautiful natural vault, through which we all crept, and then scrambled up on the top of the ice that formed this curious arch. The state of the glacier was unusually bad this summer. The guides universally declared that they had never seen it more fissured and cleft; and Coutet said, that in some seasons, we should have passed over this part of our journey in half the time, and with a quarter the difficulty. For some time our real progress was slow enough, and there was now and then a little whispering among the guides, which made us fear that the difficulties were insuperable, and we should be compelled to return. Not rarely, indeed, the chasms appeared at first view absolutely impassable; and were only at last overcome by great personal hazard and labour on the part of the guides: we did not therefore much wonder, on experience, that they had not shown any very peculiar ardour to join the expedition. By degrees, however, our step became firmer and nimbler, and the cracks narrower, and less numerous, so that we got on much faster; and the ticklish passages became rather matter of amusement than of anxiety. On first entering the glacier, we found it very slightly sprinkled with snow, but the layer became deeper and deeper, and after now and then a slip into a concealed hole, we halted to tie on the ropes. The immortal De Saussure remarked in his days, that the Chamouni guides, in general, were fearless and gay in balancing themselves on the icy ridges, however narrow and terrific they might seem, but that in crossing the frail bridges of snow, or in walking upon a crust covering a chasm, then all their apprehensions seemed to be awakened.

The difficulties of passing this glacier, and the character of the brave guides, are described by Saussure with his usual accuracy, in the following words:—

"Nous entrâmes sur le glacier, vis à vis des blocs de granit, à l'abri desquels nous avions dormi: l'entrée en est très facile, mais bientôt apres l'on s'engage dans un labyrinthe de rochers de glace séparés par de larges crevasses; ici entièrement ouvertes: là comblées en tout ou en partie par des neiges, qui souvent forment des espèces d'arches, évidées par dessous, et qui cependant sont quelquefois les seules ressources que l'on ait pour traverser ces crevasses; ailleurs, c'est une arrête tran-

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chante de glace, qui sert de pont pour les traverser. Dans quelques endroits où les crevasses sont absolument vuides, on est réduit à descendre jusques au fond, et à remonter ensuite le mur opposé par des escaliers taillés avec la hache dans la glace vive. Mais nulle part on n'atteint, ni ne voit même le roc; le fond est toujours neige ou glace: et il y a des moments où après être descendu dans ces abîmes entourés de murs de glace presque verticaux, on ne peut pas se figurer par où l'on en sortira. Cependant tant qu'on marche sur la glace vive, quelqu'étroites que soient les arrêtes, ces intrépides Chamouniards dont la tête et le pied sont également fermes, ne paroissent ni effrayés, ni inquiets; ils causent, rient, se defient les uns les autres; mais quand on passe sur ces voûtes minces suspendues au dessus des abîmes, on les voit marcher dans le plus profond silence; les trois premiers liés ensemble par des cordes a 5 ou 6 pieds de distance l'un de l'autre: les autres se tenant deux à deux par leurs bâtons, les yeux fixés sur leurs pieds, chacun s'efforçant de poser exactement et légèrement le pied dans la trace de celui qui le précede. Ce fut surtout quand nous eûmes vu la place où Marie Coutet (an old silver-haired man still living, the father of our Captain, Joseph Marie Coutet) s'étoit enfoncé, que ce genre de crainte augmenta; la neige avoit manqué tout-à coup sous ses pas, en formant autour de lui un vuide de 6 à 7 pieds de diamètre, et avoit decouvert un abîme dont on n'appercevoit ni le fond ni les bords, et cela dans un endroit où aucun signe extérieur n'indiquoit la moindre apparence de danger."*

Subsequent events have sufficiently proved the accuracy of their judgment. The tragical end of the unfortunate Mensieur Eschen, is still the basis of many a caution. In ascending the Buet, we halted to observe the fatal spot, and to hear the particulars of his death. He was traversing the glacier of the Buet with a single guide; the surface appeared a smooth slope of snow, without vestige of concealed cracks. Full of youthful ardour, he had advanced some distance alone, and suddenly disappeared. The terrified guide ran forward to the spot, but found only a circular opening like a well. The unhappy traveller had fallen through a crust of snow, into a deep fearful abyss, and could be neither seen nor heard. Far from all succour, the guide hastened down to the nearest human habitation, and, returning with ropes, was lowered into the gulph. At length the unfortunate young man was discovered, fixed upright in the sides of the chasm, quite dead, and firmly cemented to the icy walls. The heat of the body had melted a thin stratum of the ice, which soon recongealing, had strongly agglutinated him to the sides of the crevice. Not without considerable difficulty it was extricated, drawn up by ropes, and buried near Servoz. Thus perished an amiable and well-informed man, in the bloom and vigour of youth.

Having adjusted our ropes, we advanced with more confidence, and now began chiefly to suffer from the reverberation of the rays from the dazzling surface of the snow, for the sun was blazing in unclouded strength; our eyes became a good deal inflamed, and our faces began to be excoriated and blistered. To obviate this, we put on our green veils, and my worthy Simeon lent me a pair of green spectacles, a present, as he told me with a smile, from a very fair young lady, whom he had constantly attended in crossing the Col du Géant. These veils did not prove sufficient to protect the face entirely, and being often moved by a light gust of wind, were apt to confuse the sight. This was embarrassing, and even dangerous, where it was necessary to pay extreme attention to the footsteps. A mask, either of fine wire gauze or some other material, would be infinitely preferable. The spectacles gave a curious, wan air to the wide landscape of snow, and yet they were of the greatest utility in protecting the eye, but in some of the worst passages we took off veils, spectacles, and every incumbrance, to be able to judge more accurately where to place our feet. We now proceeded very gaily, laughing, joking, and chattering; there was no apparent danger, and our attention was incessantly excited by the wild whimsical outline of the icy crags. In a little deep pool, surrounded on all sides by high walls of ice, we found some water.

* Saussure, Voyages dans les Alpes, tome iv. p. 157.

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The guides rightly conjectured that this would be the last water we should find unfrozen, and, being very thirsty, we halted to take a copious draught, mixing a little *sirop de vinaigre* with our beverage. As we stood in a group at the bottom of this little dell, the view on every side was exceedingly odd and beautiful. In one direction, the outline of the icy circle was wildly rent down and cleft; in another, curiously jagged and contorted; in another rising into lofty pinnacles, or jutting out into promontories of a pale azure green, and dripping fast under the powerful rays of an afternoon sun. I attempted to take a few hasty outline sketches in my note-book, as the guides were finishing their libations; but neither words nor pencil can convey a clear conception of the wildness and singularity of the forms. We were now approaching the junction of the Glacier de Taconnai with the Glacier des Buissons, and not very far from Saussure's line of march. The disorder and confusion in the masses were evidently produced by the lateral pressure of these huge frozen seas on each other. As we were plodding quietly along the snow, absorbed in silent wonder, or only exclaiming from time to time, "How very odd!" and finding out, or fancying, the most whimsical resemblances, our footsteps were suddenly arrested by a loud roar, like that of distant heavy artillery. Every eye was instantly turned towards the sound; and, not without emotion, we saw the dust of a vast avalanche of tons of ice and snow, that had fallen from the base of the Aiguille du Midi, and part of which seemed to have fallen not very far from the spot where we halted to breakfast. Coutet and the guides appeared a good deal moved at this accident, saying that, had it fallen earlier in the day, some of us would probably have advanced no farther. This circumstance naturally brought to mind the fatal disaster of 1820, and for some short time we talked less, but perhaps thought the more. It was comfortable, however, to see that no summits impended over us at present; we were on an open slope of broken ice, covered with a pretty thick stratum of snow; we had nothing to fear but concealed chasms, from which, with our ropes on, there was no very great reason for apprehension. We marched on rapidly; and, about 3 o'clock, we saw with great pleasure, over the summit of the Breven, the quiet lake of Geneva, shining like a vast mirror in the low hazy distance. In about an hour more we began to draw nearer to the Grands Mulets rocks. The snow was now become deeper, occasionally to the knee, and commonly about half that depth. We crossed three or four natural bridges of ice, lightly spanning a dark gulph. The guides bade us carefully tread in their footsteps, and every one passed as gently and as quickly as possible, holding his ice-pole under his arm, that, should the crust break, he might still have the chance of being borne up by the strength of his baton, resting at each end on the edges of the hole. The crevices round the base of the Grands Mulets had always been represented as the most formidable in the whole passage; and, as the cracks on entering the glacier were unusually deep and numerous, it was anticipated that we should perhaps find it impossible to mount on the rocks at all, and so be compelled to encamp on the snows. Simeon said this disagreeable necessity had happened to him on a previous journey; that they had lighted a chafing-dish of charcoal on the ice, and fallen asleep round it; upon waking, they found the chafing-dish sunk into a hole, which it had melted for itself, and one of their party, who had slept over the fumes, was actually rendered insensible by the carbonic acid; they took him in their arms, rubbed him, and kept him moving till his recovery, which, however, was by no means immediate. We were all of course anxious to examine these chasms: on a first view their appearance was not very prepossessing, but we were encouraged by Coutet's remark, that, upon the whole, they were less formidable than he had feared, and that he had passed them when they were worse. Thus animated, we advanced slowly along the slippery margin; but, after several awkward passages, suddenly came to a complete stand-still, upon a sort of corner of ice, projecting into a chasm of fearful depth and width. This seemed at first an insuperable barrier to further progress. A council was called, and we stood, in anxious debate, nearly up to our knees in snow, on the edge of the gulph, but a little sheltered by a snow-bank above us. Cou-

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tet said, that when the crevices proved bad, he preferred making a considerable circuit, so as to avoid the principal chasms, and also escape a very steep and difficult passage of rock at the base of the Grands Mulets. He proposed to despatch a party to see whether we could pass the crack, by steering a little more to the right, towards the base of the Dôme-du-Goûté. Simeon and Julien immediately set out on the errand, for we had no time to lose. They were soon hid from sight, having descended some distance into another branch of the chasm to reconnoitre. In no small anxiety we watched their return, for the service was no trifle, as they were obliged to separate too widely from each other, to prevent the consequences of a slip. Simeon and Julien were concealed from us till we began to be quite uneasy, and were right glad when they re-appeared, though with somewhat long faces and reporting that the crack rather widened, so that it would be absolute madness to think of crossing it in that direction. Coutet still seemed rather of opinion that it might be as well to return on our steps, and make a yet wider circuit, to avoid passing the crevice; but his opinion did not seem generally popular; our feet too were now getting so bitterly cold, from standing still in the snow, that the prospect of reaching solid rock, and getting our feet off the ice, was exceedingly alluring. From the spot where we stood, the steep passage at the base of the Grands Mulets did not appear very difficult, but we afterwards found it far more so than we had reckoned upon; and on another occasion I would certainly make a wide circuit, and not attempt to scale the base of the Grands Mulets.

The prevalent opinion therefore was, to make at once for the rocks, which were but a few hundred yards from the corner of ice on which we stood in consultation. After diligent search, a sort of narrow bridge of ice was found, which facilitated the passage considerably, although it was still somewhat nervous. The leading guide, attached to a cord, descended with the hatchet, and cut holes as he passed. When he had secured himself a pretty secure footing, another guide cautiously followed to the same slippery landing-place. In like manner we had to make our way; and with a little sliding, crawling, and jumping, we were all on the other side of the principal crack. This manœuvre we repeated two or three times, but it was not altogether comfortable; anxiety was on every face; worthy Simeon's chin hung low, and the conversation was monosyllabic. By the way, it is very important, not only to have a cord between each two men, but also one, if not two spare cords. After about twenty minutes scrambling, we stepped with great satisfaction, from the surface of the glacier, to a projecting mass of rock.

The first sensation, on placing the foot upon the solid and comparatively warm surface of the rock, was quite luxurious; and the muscles were relieved from that incessant tension necessary in walking upon ice. Some notion of this feeling may be formed by recollecting the effect upon the ancles, of 4 or 5 hours skaiting, the first day of the season. Having all reached the base of the Grands Mulets, the next affair was to ascend them; and this was a work of time and fatigue. Coutet and Simeon estimated the height of the steep part, at about 250 feet. It did not appear to me by any means so much, but it was certainly the most rapid ascent I ever crawled up. Perpendicular, of course, it was not, else, of course, we could not have got up at all; but it was steeper, for instance, than La Cheminée on the Breven, with the additional comfort, that if you slipped off, you would have descended directly into the blue yawning crevices beneath. The masses of rock were sometimes loose, and it was necessary to examine with great care the stability of a block before trusting your weight to it, for the dislodgement of one large stone would have been no very pleasant salutation to the party below, two or three of whom it must infallibly have swept down into a chasm. The guide in advance endeavoured to direct you where to place your hands or foot; and, in very ticklish parts, he let down the end of his rope, which you tied round the breast, then crept forward, and were now and then dragged upwards by sheer muscular effort. There was necessity, however, for caution, lest a sudden jerk should bring the guide toppling on your head; or, had he retained his footing, still the cord might not have prevented your getting so violent a swing against the rocks, as to have

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incapacitated you for prosecuting the excursion farther. Our progress up this steep was slow enough. I apprehend it was not much less than half an hour before we found ourselves all safe and sound, on the upper part of the Grands Mulets; with only a long, broken, but not dangerous slope, to ascend to the place of halt for the night. Long faces were now shortened, and anxious silence exchanged for gaiety and joke. Coutet, a natural wag, was in high glee, and Michel, the youngest of the guides, one of the four who had never been to the summit, was the *incus* of Coutet's wit. "Vite, Michel! courez à l'hotel! diner de suite; nous aurons un dindon! Feu dans le petit Salon, N°. Vingt-un! Les meilleurs lits pour neuf, voyez vous? Allez! Vite, mon cher!"—In ten minutes we drew up to this hotel, which is certainly as well ventilated as any in Europe.

It consisted of an uneven ledge of rock about five feet wide and twenty long. One side toward the Aiguille du Midi was well defended by a solid natural parapet, rising as a back to it; on the other three sides was a little wall of loose stones piled one on the other, half a foot high, so as to form a sort of oblong parallelogram. There was nothing like roof, nor any projection of rock to shelter you above, so that on entering the petit salon, we found what we did not find in the petit salon below, the luxury of a carpet, for it was covered by a deep stratum of snow. The first business was to scrape out most of this snow with a flat stone, and then to turn up the dry sides of the other flat stones, which served as a mattress; a single blanket was then spread, and, having put on dry shoes, gaiters, &c., we sat down very snugly. When we arrived at the sleeping shelf, a little after five o'clock in the evening, the barometer was exposed, to cool the middle portion of mercury, probably heated in carrying. It then stood at 19 inches 8 lines, French measure. The thermometer of the barometer, at 8° Reaumur. The exterior air, 8½ Reaum. The guides now fell to work to light up a fire of some pieces of wood, which were found at the edge of the glacier, and had been brought up for the purpose. An old ladder was found on the rocks, left here exposed since last year, and no longer serviceable. Julien cut up part of it into shavings, as dexterously as an old seaman would have done, and we soon had a wreathing column of smoke, and a cheerful blaze that enlivened the whole scenery. No water was found any where on the rocks; the great black copper saucepan was therefore piled up with snow, and this when melted filled half the vessel. Some wine and sugar greatly improved the potion. The knapsacks were hastily unpacked, and we began supper with much appetite, and peals of laughter at the oddness of our situation and personal appearance: night-caps, Welsh wigs, drying shoes, green veils, broad-brimmed hats, the great black kettle, smoking negus, excoriated faces—it was altogether a comical scene. My friend's night-cap deserves a few words. On the evening before our departure, an English gentleman, full of the milk of human kindness, came to Captain Sherwill, saying, "So you are going upward, Sir?" "Think of it, Sir." "You'll be very cold." "So they say, Sir." "Wish I could be of any service!" "Sir, I thank you." "Afraid I can't; but stop! stay two seconds." The worthy gentleman vanished for an instant, and then re-appeared with a superb flannel night-cap. "There Sir," said he, holding up the night-cap with much benignity, "take that, Sir; will be very serviceable, I assure you!" My friend hesitating a moment, having never seen the gentleman before, he said smilingly, "Come, Sir, no refusing; I have a particular wish that you should accept my night-cap; will keep your ears so warm, Sir, I shall have pleasure in thinking about it." There was no resisting such an appeal; accordingly the night-cap was gratefully accepted, displayed at supper on the Grands Mulets, mounted to the summit of Mont Blanc, and is now carefully preserved as an invaluable relic.

Coutet, who had the arrangement of that business, ordered the cold fowls to be reserved exclusively for to-morrow, observing that, however keen our appetites might be now, we should become far more fastidious, when we got a few thousand feet higher, and that we might be able to eat a pullet when the other provisions were nauseated. After supper, the guides concocted a mixture of melted snow, brandy, lemons, sugar, &c., which by courtesy we

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denominated punch; but the increasing chilness of the evening made it agreeable, and it served to drink the health of the distinguished Author, as we amused ourselves with repeating stanzas of the immortal ode, "Needy knife-grinder! whither are you going," &c. Julien, too, cheered his jocund circle with some mountain ballads, as they sat munching toasted cheese round the glowing embers.

Evening was drawing on apace, when, on a sudden, we were all roused to our feet by the loud roar of an avalanche, which fell very near us; a prodigious mass of soft, loose snow slipped from the impending heights of the Mont Maudit into the deep narrow valley at the foot of the Grands Mulets. Standing on the height above, near our sleeping shelf, we could watch the rapid motion of the mass, for it continued falling several seconds, and a large cloud of snowy dust rushed nearly half across the valley. We were highly delighted, and even the guides shouted, and seemed vastly pleased, for so large an avalanche, and seen so close, and under so favourable circumstances, was not an every-day occurrence, even to them. It was decidedly one of the grandest I ever saw, but though larger and more sublime, perhaps not more beautiful, than one which we saw gliding down like a stream of liquid silver, from the heights of the Jungfrau, as we stood on the opposite heights of the Wengern Alps. The deep valley between the Grands Mulets and the base of the Mont Maudit is filled with those immense cubes of snow, which have been called *seracs*, and a wilder scene no fancy ever pictured.

As evening advanced, the scene around became increasingly beautiful: not merely the round head, but a considerable portion of the snowy side of the Buet, appeared towering far above the line of the Aiguilles Rouges. We saw a considerable part of the Lake of Geneva looking increasingly bright as the surrounding hills grew grey in the shades of evening. On its northern side we could distinctly make out the town of Nion. The horizon was bounded by the long dark line of the Jura. Beneath us lay the quiet valley and village of Chamouni, but we were far too high to hear the slightest sound from below. On the side of the Breven hung a cultivated patch, called, I think, the village of Merlet: then beyond, the valley of Sallenche, and thick masses of mist resting on the bold turrets of the Aiguille de Varens. But the finest point of view was, perhaps, that towards Aix-les-bains in Savoy, or nearly in that direction; it was beautifully clear. I counted, distinctly, no less than eight ranges of mountain-tops, one behind the other, gradually fading away, shade after shade, and at last surmounted by a fine bright evening sky of a very peculiar tinge, between crimson and flesh-colour. It seemed to me that I had never seen precisely that tinge of sky before. Nearer the eye was the summit of the hill that overtops the broken line of the rugged Glacier de Taconnai. Under our feet was the vast plain of snow extending toward the base of the Dôme-du-Gôuté, in various parts of which we could discern immense dark caverns in the snow, near which our morning's path would lie. Far, far above us, the snowy summit of the mountain still receded in distant majesty, so that after a day's progress we really seemed not to have come much nearer the top. Then turning round, you saw several dark rocks deeply embedded in snow, to the whole of which has been given the somewhat indistinct name of the Mont Maudit. Then, directly in front, rose the immense Aiguille du Midi, whose summit had just ceased to reflect the glow of sunset. There was hardly a breath of wind; all was hushed and still as death; we gazed round and round, till the scene grew dim in twilight, and then sat down on our stony couch. A second blanket was spread as a covering; three poles were placed in an inclined position against the rock, and to them was attached a sheet so as to form a rude tent over our heads; yet it was so loose that, had it snowed in the night, we should have been well nigh covered before morning. The song of the guides had ceased; their evening prayers were said, and we all betook ourselves to sleep, as best we could, dozing at intervals: every now and then the low distant roar of an avalanche roused our attention. The stones that formed our couch were uneven and angular enough, and the air was very chill,

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though less so than we had expected. About five o'clock, on our arrival, the thermometer was at 8¾ Reaum.; at half-past seven it had sunk to 3° Reaum.; and at a quarter after eight it was at zero, Reaum., and probably not many degrees lower during the night. My amiable companion slept little, being much distressed by continued nausea. During the night I rose, left our rude tent, and reconnoitred the appearance of the weather. The guides were all sleeping, some near the end of the tent, others in a small cavity in the rock below. The dark sky was perfectly clear, and the stars sparkling in the ebon vault. To complete the sublimity of the scene, the bright moon was shining on the top of Mont Blanc, and throwing strong masses of light and shade over the wide waste of snow. This scene alone was worth a pilgrimage! No words can convey an adequate impression of the solemnity and awful wildness of this moonlight picture! Far above, the cold beams were playing on that fatal spot where rest the bodies of the three brave guides embalmed in ice. Yet it was not certain that, from the annual movement of the glacier, the bodies might not be slowly descending toward the valley, and perhaps much nearer us than we were aware. With this thought another insensibly mixed itself. Did not these men sleep the night before on this very ledge? Were they not as full of alacrity and hope as ourselves? What, if to-morrow evening's rising moon should find us as they are? If it should be so, what is beyond?—When long chained down to the tiny, contemptible vanities of men, the contracted spirit shrinks from the vast contemplation of Eternity, and fears to think itself immortal. The majestic truths of Revelation are too mighty for its puny grasp. But here, amidst the awful monuments of a Power that works unseen, escaping away from man and all his futilities, the dreams of infidel philosophy seduce no more: they are no longer congenial to the heart. Man feels himself a worm, an insect, an atom; but he bethinks himself that Heaven's wide regard still rests individually on him, a speck in creation. Then he is not afraid.

SANDOVAL, OR THE FREEMASON.*

THERE is a combination of attractions in the title of this historical novel, which will very rarely be found in works of the class to which it belongs. It is a Spanish tale, written by a Spaniard, who has already made a successful *début* in our literature with another novel, "Don Esteban." It gives us reason to expect that our curiosity will be gratified, by the history of freemasonry in Spain, (about which so little is known,) of its influence over her risings and revolutions—the display, in their real colours, of the characters that figured in them, which derive an additional interest from belonging to our own day; and, combined with all this, the right we have to expect from a Spaniard, those lights and shadows of Spanish life which none but a native is qualified to give us.

We have been so much accustomed, in Spanish novel-writing, to the insipidity of pastoral life, to impossible adventures, or to the absurd and disgusting feats of beggars and Picaros, that we are somewhat surprised, on opening Sandoval, to find the Author talking so much like folks of this world, and the authors of our own generation. Our Spaniard writes in English, and in singularly good English too, which is more than can be said of many worthy authors whom we could name.

Sandoval is a young Spanish officer, belonging to the third Spanish army, which, after the battle of Toulouse, has received orders to return to Spain. Previous to the departure of the army from France, letters

* Sandoval, or the Freemason; a Spanish Tale. By the Author of "Don Esteban." 3 vols. 12mo. London, 1826.

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have been received by several of the officers, announcing the violation of the constitution by Ferdinand and the servile faction, which creates a prodigious sensation in the army and hastens its dissolution. Sandoval, who is represented as an enthusiastic *liberal*, is particularly indignant at the King's treachery; and his feelings on the subject acquire additional strength from a letter which he receives from his beloved and betrothed Gabriela, informing him of the ascendency of the monks under the "absolute king," and the accusations of heresy and infidelity which have been insinuated against him, into the superstitious ear of her worthy mother, Doña Angela. As soon as the army is dissolved, Sandoval hastens to Spain, and finds all the evil news communicated by his Gabriela, confirmed: he is received with insult and coldness by Doña Angela, and with proud contempt by Father Lobo, the family confessor, and his nephew, Don Aniceto Artimaña, the *Comisario regio* of Logroño, who hopes, through the agency and influence of his worthy uncle, to dispossess Sandoval at once of his family estate, and the affections of Gabriela. In the first of these laudable projects, he is favoured by the flight of Sandoval's father, who has withdrawn himself from prosecution for alleged political offences, and whose house and possessions have been seized on and confiscated to government;—in his designs on the fair Gabriela he conceives himself warranted, by the possession of certain graces of person, of which a very whimsical catalogue, somewhat in Washington Irving's *caricaturing* vein, is given in vol. i. p. 161.

A scene which follows, in which this seducing person and his uncle are represented as doing penance in the Dominican convent, to which the holy confessor belongs, on hams, capons, and wine of Valdepeñas, is very edifying.

Sandoval is now called from Logroño, by a letter from his exiled father, who enjoins him to become a member of a society of freemasons. Sandoval complies, and the first order he receives from the society is to join the rising under Gorriz and Mina, at Pamplona. The spirited account of this unfortunate attempt, given by our author, we cannot quote at length, and should injure by giving in fragments.

The mutiny of the soldiers totally frustrates the plans of Mina, who is forced to retreat. Sandoval, unable to endure a longer separation from Gabriela, determines to return to Logroño, and on his way thither, stops for a night at the house of a Spanish farmer, a tenant of his father's, where a very amusing scene is presented to us. The village *Cura* has just paid a visit to the farmer in search of tithes, and is succeeded by a Franciscan, a Capuchin, a lay-brother, a mercenary, a missionary, &c. begging for their convents.

At the house of the farmer, Sandoval discovers that the monk and his nephew have succeeded in prevailing upon Dona Angela to compel her daughter to take the veil. The ceremony is just about to conclude, when Sandoval interrupts it by rushing into the church, on the floor of which he falls senseless. During his swoon he is borne off by order of the monk to a frightful dungeon, of the interior of which we have a very powerful and animated description.

From the horrors of this prison he escapes, in consequence of the rebellion of its inmates, and the massacre of the gaolers, and hastens to join the gallant Riego at Oviedo. Of this General and his family, all the members of which have excited so much interest in this country,

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They found young Trophonius alive,
Like a toad in a segment of stone.

The youth gave his finders a rod,
Whose point with a tremulous swing
Would vibrate awhile on the sod,
Then point where to probe for a spring.
In grateful requital, the Greeks,
Securing in cisterns the tide,
Extoll'd him with water-logg'd cheeks,
And made him a god when he died.

Anointed with unguents and oils,
To his fane, in the bramble-girt hollow,
They bore in their hands votive spoils,
And dubb'd him the Son of Apollo;
They proffer'd him bees-wax and honey,
In milk-white habiliments clad,
Some enter'd the cave, looking funny,
But all came away looking sad.

When Greece to the Crescent bent low,
And Art found in Athens a grave,
Lord Elgin, with pick-axe and hoe,
Dug deep for the bramble-girt cave.
He bore it o'er mountain and heath,
And, aided by ocean and air,
Immovably placed it beneath
The mansion of London's Lord Mayor.

There, entering on hands and on knees,
Bœotian saints still we find,
Led by females, as busy as bees,
Who leave their drone helpmates behind.
In quest of the well-spring of Grace,
Aloft through the cavern they crawl,
And meet, face to sanctified face,
In his Lordship's Egyptian Hall.

There Zealanders, tarr'd and tattoo'd,
And red-ochred chiefs meet the sight;
And water and tubs round are strew'd
For washing the Blackamoor white:
And Mummery revels and feasts,
And Reason deep slumbering nods;
And Folly and Farce are the priests,
And Monkeys and Leeks are the gods.

There, Scotia, thy big Boanerges
His thunderbolt hurls on the ear,
Asserts lack of lucre, and urges
His watch on a pawnbroker Peer.
No homily there comes amiss,
Provided the text is "*Qui dat;*"
And the honey-tongued Reverend This
Responds to the Reverend That.

Then deem not, Trophonius, too tragic
The fate that attends thy retreat:
Though borne from Bœotia, its magic
Still tends it in Mansion House Street.
As long as thy priests call for money
From widow and maid, man and lad;
Though some may walk in looking funny,
Yet all will walk out looking sad.

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NARRATIVE OF AN EXCURSION TO THE SUMMIT OF MONT BLANC.*

By Dr. Edmund Clark, and Captain Markham Sherwill.

Friday, August 20th, 1825.—He that has any thing to do will pretty certainly awake in the morning. The probability is considerably increased if he should happen to be sleeping on a bed of angular stones. Our rugged mattress and hard pillows did not quite resemble a bed of down, so that we were little tempted to luxurious idleness. Soon after three, my active friend began to be stirring. The air in the rude tent was vitiated and heavy, and we fancied that some parts of the coarse awning felt stiff from condensed and congealed perspiration. Towards morning the sensation of cold had been sufficiently severe, for our covering was slight. Kind Madame Simond had put up for me a pair of very warm slippers: these were quite invaluable on an islet of barren rock, surrounded by a wide expanse of snow. My friend's flannel night-cap also did special service: these little acts of courteousness often produce a cordial feeling of good-will, not to be forgotten through a whole life. On putting aside the awning from the edge of the rock to examine the sky, we found our eager wishes gratified, and a bright, clear, cloudless, summer morning just dawning upon us. The brave guides were still quiet and snug—some lying at the end of the tent, others in a little cavern beneath it. They did not appear very vehemently excited either by ambition or by curiosity. To our frequent demand, "Temps de se lever, n'est-ce pas? Bien beau temps, quand faut il partir?" The calm reply was, "Pas encore, Messieurs. Il n'y a rien qui presse. On ne peut pas voir." However, after a few tender enquiries for stiffened joints, aching limbs, and smarting faces, we were all on the alert soon after four. Some of the guides were busy in preparing breakfast, others were occupied in arranging the provisions to be taken up with us. Over the victualling department Coutet presided, and by his order we were provisioned scantily enough, as it then seemed. We had before us a walk over the snow of fourteen hours, during which we should not once put our feet on solid rock. Yet the only provisions for nine men were three pounds of bread, three bottles of wine, some lemonade, five pullets, and a small stock of raisins and prunes. But Coutet had rightly calculated; for of this light wallet we brought back a considerable portion untouched.

On examining the shoes worn the preceding day, they were found so completely soaked by the snow, as to be unfit for continuing the walk. Happily we had another pair in reserve, and it was only necessary to fix into the heels a few ice-screws, of which also provident Simeon had a small stock in hand. Our great-coats, sheets, blankets, &c. were left exposed to the sun on the rocks. It would hardly have occurred to us that there was even here some

* Continued from page 449.

In the first part of this little narrative, there are several verbal inaccuracies, glaring "maculæ quas incuria fudit." The credit of this negligence belongs rather to the writer than to the printer. One apology only can be offered: the paper was hastily written during severe mental and bodily indisposition. To prevent disappointment also, the scientific reader is very respectfully requested to skip the article altogether;—for him it was never intended; it is wholly and intentionally popular, and not even suited to the eye of a modern *bas Bleu* philosopher. But why was it not deeply scientific? Why does not a child try to wield a battle-axe?

"Versate diù quid ferre recusent,
Quid valeant humeri."

Mere ignorance is despicable enough, but still more disgusting is an ill-placed display of borrowed science. The excursion was a mere romantic ramble to please a friend, and these hasty notes of it are chiefly compiled to gratify perchance some of those few unlearned persons, who, horrible to conceive, never read La Place, and don't understand Fluxions.

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hazard of robbery; but Simeon told us that on one occasion he had left some articles on the rock, and on his return, discovered with prodigious astonishment, that parts of them were eaten up, he imagined, by mice. It is not difficult to conceive, that a Grand Mulet mouse would be disposed to break his fast. Coutet told us that he had once killed here an animal something like a weasel: he described it as larger than a rat, of a reddish colour, yellowish on the belly, with a long tail, a very disagreeable odour, and whiskers like a cat. No specimen has ever been preserved. It would have been exceedingly amusing to find one of these creatures, but we could perceive not the slightest trace of their existence, either on our arrival or return. Perhaps they are now extinct. How they ever contrived to exist at all on an insulated rock like this, it would not be very easy to explain; nor if they were only occasionally visitors, how they could have got across the Glacier. I should still, however, imagine, that they must have strayed from the rocks of the Aiguille du Midi.

As we were all exceedingly stiff, from our uneasy couch, these little preliminary matters took up some time, and we were not in full march before five. Should any future traveller be compelled, by bad weather, or other causes, to sleep the first night on the Grands Mulets (which, we beg to repeat, he should avoid if possible) then it is very important that he should make preparations over night, have little or nothing to do in the morning, and leave the rocks, at the very latest, by half after three o'clock,—sooner, if practicable. Saussure complains a little of the trouble he found in hastening his departure in the morning. "Le lendemain," says he, "malgré le grand intérêt que nous avions tous à partir de bon matin, il s'éleva tant de difficultés que nous ne fûmes en pleine marche qu'à six heures et demie." *

In filing up the rocks we passed by the remains of a square hut, called "La Cabane de Saussure," by whom it was built. It now consists only of four low walls of uncemented stones, without roof, and partially filled with snow. We asked the guides why they had not chosen this encampment. They thought it more exposed than the one they had selected. I did not think so: and certainly the delight of sleeping on a stone that had perhaps supported the head of the immortal naturalist, would have determined us to prefer this resting-place, had we at first known where it was; but we had now left all our dormitory apparatus on the shelf below, and to it, therefore, were obliged to return.

Descending from the rocks, and entering on the snow, we found it just of a pleasant consistence. We sunk only two or three inches, so as to give firmness to the footstep without much exertion. Our course was now not immediately upward to the summit, but to the right toward the base of the Dôme du Goûté. We had for some time a free unobstructed passage: the expanse of snow swelling into gentle undulations, without visible crevices. By and by the cloudless sun burst upon us over the shoulder of the superb Aiguille du Midi. It was altogether like a fine sunny morning walk over a snow-covered Scotch waste. For instance, like a winter morning's ramble from the foot of Benledi to the wild Bridge of Keltie. We plodded exultingly along, full of gaiety and exuberant buoyancy of spirit. Every face was smiling, and we all looked down into the deep valley beneath with a sort of exultation. I believe no one of the party would have exchanged situations with those below for any trifling recompense. Our stiffness soon went off entirely, and we felt an indescribable lightness and strength of muscle. Neither coffee nor champaigne can give any thing like the bounding elasticity of mind and body, inhaled with the fresh mountain air. This feeling, however, gradually goes off, and is succeeded by depression, when you rise to a very considerable elevation. The height at which the rarefaction of the air becomes painful, varies in different individuals. My friend Captain Sherwill began to feel indisposed on the Grands Mulets. When we were rather higher

* Saussure, Voyages, tom. iv. p. 156.

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than the Peak of Teneriffe, I began to feel similarly affected. At the height of thirteen thousand feet most of the guides complained a little; and on the summit the whole party suffered, though in different degrees. The whole scenery around us, for some time after quitting the rocks, was in a very high degree pleasing and novel. The sky above was quite clear, and of a deep blue. The icy surface of the higher slopes glittered like enormous mirrors, and beneath our feet the pure unsullied snow was dimpled like the sand on the sea-shore by the ripple of the retiring wave. On every side we were embayed by gigantic masses of granite soaring to a vast elevation. Then immediately above them, receding in the distance, rose the white head of the Alpine king, apparently defying all approach, and so fearfully high, that we could scarcely look up at it without some degree of intimidation.

The line of march gradually led us to the verge of several caverns in the snow, of which we had seen the dark yawning mouths when looking down from the rocks. These caverns we examined with considerable attention; and assuredly they are alone worth not a little labour and fatigue. We had seen nothing like them in our previous rambles on the ice. In many cases they appeared to be portions of a vast chasm, which extended across the plain, but was in general covered by a thick layer of snow. In different parts, probably from the sudden widening of the chasm, the snowy arch had fallen by its own weight, and displayed the terrific abysses beneath. Holding one another by the hand, we could approach the very edge, and look down into the mysterious darkness. In some parts we could see the continuation of the chasm under the snow, and the eye plunged some distance into the gloom till all was totally dark. We observed too very attentively the nature of the arch above the gulph. It appeared in general of great solidity, but in some parts near the edge was evidently so thin that the weight of a single man must infallibly have broken through the fragile crust. Into such a deep dark gulph it is probable that the unhappy Monsieur Eschen fell. The prospect of passing over some of these capacious graves on so frail a support was by no means entertaining. I think it probable that had a thousand dragoons thought proper to leap on horseback into some of these vast chasms, they would all have sunk instantly from view, and the gulph would still have afforded ample accommodation for a second thousand. Perhaps it is understating the size of the mouth of the caverns in some places, to say that a large frigate could have been very securely docked within them. They were decidedly among the most singular, awful and sublime spectacles I ever saw. The smoking crater of Vesuvius, though certainly grander from its stupendous magnitude, is yet less appalling, and gives you far less vividly the impression of inevitable destruction should any accident occur. And they are not awful only, but beautiful: along the sides all the wonders of icy crystallization are most magnificently displayed: the smoother walls were in some parts chequered with a profusion of reticulated hoar frost, more delicate than gauze, more variegated than the richest damask. In some parts, and very frequently round the orifice of the vault, hung rows of large tapering icicles, clear as crystal. Once only in my life have I seen a display of icicles almost as superb; it was in the middle of a very severe winter near the upper fall of Clyde. In some of these caverns the icicles did not hang in parallel rows, but crossed each other in wild confusion, evidently from the rupture and displacement of the masses from which they depended; in other parts, where the mass of snow behind was cut vertically, we could trace the annual strata by long bands of light blue ice, generally almost straight, sometimes waving, but still preserving their relative distances, like the lines of flint in the chalk rocks of Alum Bay. Saussure, describing these regions, says, "Ces neiges sont coupées de loin en loin par d'énormes et superbes crevasses. Leur coupe vive et nette montre les neiges disposées par couches horizontales, et chacune de ces couches correspond à une année." Looking very attentively into one of the pits, my friend observed a double row of icicles, some depending from above, others rising to meet them from a ledge below. I suppose they might be called in technical terms stalactites

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and stalagmites, and be formed in the same manner, the drop from the icicle above having fallen to congeal on the top of the icicle below.*

The examination of these caverns in the snow detained us some time: so singular and various was their appearance, and so much had they moreover of mystery and concealment, that we were never weary of prying into their recesses. As we held one another, there was very little danger; and we regretted not to be able to linger here for two or three hours. It was necessary, however, to hasten forward, and having passed one large pit, we found it ending in a long deep crack, by the side of which we walked some time without finding any way of getting over. Ascending on a hillock of snow, this crevice was perceived to extend so far, that to go entirely round it would require no small space of time. The guides proposed to cross it directly, rather than make this circuit; and it is very clear that they were quite in the right. Had we consumed an hour in going round, it is now evident either that we could not have reached the summit at all, or should not easily have regained the rocks at night. We were implicitly directed by their advice, and depended wholly on their ingenuity to get across the crack to the opposite side. Hitherto we had met with no considerable obstruction, but this was really no trifle. I think it was in fact one of the few really dangerous parts of the excursion. The chasm, though wide above, was not very wide beneath. The sides sloped down to a kind of serpentine chink from three to four feet wide, but of unknown depth. Our guide Julien, a thoroughly brave steady man, descended first to the edge of the chink, cutting holes as he descended. When at the brink it was still too wide to jump across, especially as the landing-place on the other side was steep and slippery. Julien called to us above to hand down our ice-poles; accordingly four or five poles were handed down to him. These poles he placed from brink to brink, so as to make a little bridge, and then, after cautiously trying its strength, he slowly and steadily walked over to the opposite side. I must honestly confess that I did not at all admire this very ingenious contrivance, and did not much care to look on while Julien performed the feat. But the difficulty was not then at an end, for he had afterwards to climb up a high bank of snow so exceedingly steep that he could only ascend by cutting alternate holes for his feet and hands with the axe. This was a very singular and awkward affair; we stood watching him in breathless anxiety, expecting every moment that he would slip backward into the chasm. For his sake and our own we were heartily glad to see Julien safely emerge and fairly landed on the plane of snow above. He then let down his rope to assist and steady us in crossing the bridge of poles, and afterwards to help us in mounting the snow-bank. I am rather inclined to think that this passage was the most hazardous of the whole expedition; nor do I know whether the danger was greater of slipping off the tottering bridge into the chasm, or of falling backward in climbing up the frozen bank of hard snow, where we had now and then to cling to the holes in the ice till our fingers ached with the grasp. Yet the aid afforded by these brave mountaineers is so prompt and so efficient, that the danger is by no means so great to the traveller as it would seem to be. To the guides, and to the guides only, belongs the merit either of courage or of dexterity in the matter.

It is possible that this crevice, which gave us so much trouble, may be a continuation of that mentioned by Saussure, and near which happened the little accident he so pleasantly describes. "Après une heure de marche nous vînmes côtoyer une immense crevasse: quoiqu'elle eut plus de cent pieds de largeur, on n'en voyoit le fond nulle part. Dans un moment où nous nous

* By the way, one of the most wonderful examples of that form of petrifaction occurs in a singular little cavern on the right side of the road not far from the Fall of Terni. Unless the guide Benedetto is asked to point out the cavern discovered by himself, as he says, it is probable that the traveller will pass it unnoticed. Some of the pendent masses are of great size, and when the grotto is lighted up the appearance is truly beautiful.

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reposions tous debout sur son bord, en admirant sa profondeur et en observant les couches de ses neiges, mon domestique laissa échapper le pied de mon baromètre qu'il tenoit à la main ; ce pied glissa avec la rapidité d'une flèche sur la paroi inclinée de la crevasse, et alla se planter à une grande profondeur dans la paroi opposée, où il demeura fixé en oscillant comme la lance d'Achille sur la rive du Scamandre. J'eus un moment de chagrin très vif, parceque ce pied servoit non seulement au baromètre, mais à divers autres instruments qui se fixoient au dessus : mais au moment même quelques uns de mes guides sensibles à ma peine m'offrirent d'aller le reprendre, et comme la crainte de les exposer m'empêchoit d'y consentir, ils me protestèrent qu'ils ne courroient aucun risque : au moment même l'un d'eux se passa une corde sous les bras, et les autres le calèrent ainsi jusqu'au pied du baromètre, qu'il arracha et rapporta en triomphe."—Saussure, tom. 4, page 161.

Finding that we had not a moment to lose, we began to mount a long snowy steep towards the Petit Plateau. This was rather laborious, but not dangerous. In about two hours we reached this smaller plane, and by this time the sun was become so inconveniently hot that we took off our additional clothes and left them upon the snow till our return. The snow was getting considerably deeper, sometimes more than half way to the knee. We began to feel a good deal fatigued, and were often obliged to rest and pant; the raisins and prunes with a handful of snow were very serviceable to moisten our parched lips. We crossed the Petit Plateau in about half an hour, and found the change from a steep ascent to a comparative plane agreeable enough ; but to this succeeded another long and weary slope of an hour and a half before gaining the commencement of the Grand Plateau. My amiable companion suffered most severely from incessant nausea, head-ache, and faintness, yet he bore all these distressing sensations with invincible firmness, and was as fully bent on prosecuting the ramble as though he had felt no uneasiness. Having been already in some degree seasoned to high altitudes, the extreme rarefaction of the atmosphere did not affect me so soon or so violently; yet we most of us felt some head-ache, extreme exhaustion, and stupor ; in ascending the upper parts of the slope, we were compelled to count footsteps and halt every two or three minutes to recover breath. The rays of the sun too were literally like wasp-stings on our excoriated faces, and the sensation of heat intense and overpowering in crossing a plane of snow: we longed for shade perhaps almost as vehemently as we should have done on a Numidian desert. In this attenuated air the sensations both of heat and of cold seemed to have acquired twofold intensity. Having at last reached the Grand Plateau, we found it strewed with the *débris* of a tremendous avalanche, the ruins of which extended to a prodigious distance. Thousands of tons of hardened snow had fallen from the impending heights of the mountain between the summit and the Dôme-du-Goûté. This immense mass, the gradual accumulation of a winter, seems to fall annually. Mr. Clissold, who heard the thunder of its fall from beneath on the Grands Mûlets, describes it thus : " Suddenly a sound as of reiterating peals of the most tumultuous thunder, or the roar of the ocean bursting its boundaries, and hurling in its progress vast fragments of rock, struck the guides mute with astonishment, and at the moment a cloud was seen resting upon the summit. We afterwards learned that an avalanche had fallen upon the Grand Plateau, burying beneath its ruins much of the path we had traversed. It was perceived through a telescope at the distance of ten miles by a party on the Col-de-Balme." We concluded from the appearance of the ruins that they had not fallen many days ; for on the preceding Friday, the 19th, there had been a considerable snow-storm, and these *débris* being generally quite bare, we inferred that the avalanche had taken place during the last week. Happening to say to Julien, as we were wandering in a labyrinth of icy blocks, that it was well we were not crossing at the time of the fall, he replied with a most significant shrug, " Monsieur, si toute l'Europe auroit été ici, ils auroient été écrasé comme des mouches ! Une armée toute entière auroit été perdu sans remission." He was silent, and then added

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with somewhat ludicrous gravity, "Ah! nous sommes toujours bien petits, mais ici surtout!"

Advancing among the vast cubes of ice, we found one mass of a light greenish colour, corresponding exactly to the description given by Saussure of the seracs he found in the same place. "J'eus du plaisir (says he) à observer ces seracs, que l'on a rarement occasion de voir d'aussi près : j'en mesurai qui avoient plus de 12 pieds en tous sens : le fond, ou la partie qui avoit été contigue au roc, étoit une glace à petites bulles, translucide, blanche, dure, plus compacte que celle des glaciers ordinaires. La face opposée, qui avoit été originairement la face supérieure, étoit encore de la neige quoiqu'un peu durcie, et on voyoit dans le bloc toutes les nuances entre ces deux extrêmes."—T. iv. 163.

Having got a little in advance of our party, I sat down beneath one of these huge icy blocks to be sheltered from the piercing sun-beams. So delightful was the compound feeling of rest and cool shade, that I leaned back on the ice and was asleep in a few moments. This delicious slumber was soon broken by a summons to breakfast. We all sat down upon the snow in silence; for we were too fatigued to talk much. We were now far more elevated than the Peak of Teneriffe, and began to feel more and more the influence of the thin air. I had something like nausea, with considerable head-ache, and the feeling seemed pretty general. It was laughable enough to see the same men, who a few hours before would have eaten a fraction of a roasted buffalo, now hanging their heads in silence, and fastidiously picking a pullet's wing. Worthy Simeon had still some appetite, but said that, after eating, his head-ache was increased. With some difficulty I got through half a chicken's wing, swallowed a few crumbs of bread and a few drops of wine, and this with raisins was my whole consumption of food during this fatiguing march of fourteen hours. The digestive powers seemed totally deranged: we were really in an incipient stage of fever, and required exactly the same treatment. The guides had brought up some lemonade from the rocks, but either our taste was vitiated, or the liquid bad, for we could not drink it;—nothing but a little snow and a few raisins seemed agreeable or refreshing. We had now not quite a mile to proceed before arriving at the spot where the sad catastrophe occurred in 1820. This circumstance threw an air of seriousness into all faces. Our captain Coutet and brave Julien had both most narrowly escaped death; nor could they approach the grave of their unhappy comrades without emotion. Julien gave a very clear and minute account of this disaster, which I wrote down immediately from his lips. Every particular was of course interesting to us, but might not be so to others, and we have only space for the heads. The party had breakfasted on the Grand Plateau, near the spot at which we halted. They then traversed the plain, and began to ascend the highest steeps of the mountain, called among the guides La Calotte de Mont Blanc.* In proceeding obliquely upward, they approached a dark rock, which we saw above us deeply imbedded in the snow. "The order of march," said Julien, "was this;—at the moment of the disaster, the leading guide was Pierre Cairriez; 2d, Pierre Balmat; 3d, Auguste Tairraz: (these three perished,) then 4th, moi (Julien Devouassou); then next to me, Marie Coutet (our captain); then behind were five other guides, with Dr. Hamel, (a Russian physician,) and two English gentlemen. Suddenly (said he) I heard a sort of rushing sound, not very loud, but I had no time to think about it; for as I heard the sound, at the same instant the avalanche was upon us. I felt my feet slide from beneath me, and saw the three first men fallen upon the snow with their feet foremost. In falling, I cried out loudly, 'Nous sommes tous perdus!' I tried to support myself by planting the ice-pole below me, but in vain. The weight of snow forced me over the baton, and it slipped out of my hand. I rolled down like a ball, in

* The close black silk-cap, worn on the crown of the head by the priests, is called the Calotte. Whenever the original French is given, it is exactly as spoken by the guides, without any emendation.

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the mass of loose snow. At the foot of the slope was a yawning chasm, to the edge of which I was rapidly descending. Three times I saw the light, as I was rolling down the slope; and when we were all on the very edge of the chasm, I saw the leg of one of my comrades, just as he pitched down into the crevice. I think it must have been poor Auguste; for it looked black, and I remember that Auguste had on black gaiters. This was the last I saw of my three companions, who fell headlong into the gulph, and were never seen or heard again. At this moment I was just falling into the same crevice, and can but confusedly understand why I did not: but I think I owe my life to a very singular circumstance. Dr. Hamel had given me a barometer to carry; this was fastened round my waist by a strong girdle. I fancy that at the moment this long barometer got beneath and across me; for the girdle suddenly broke, and I made a sort of bound as I fell; and so instead of following my poor comrades, I was pushed over into another crevice close to that in which they were killed. This chasm was already partly filled with snow: I do not think I fell more than fifty feet down, alighting on a soft cushion of snow, and a good deal covered with it above. I suppose before tumbling into the chasm, we slid down from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet; but I cannot tell, for it seemed to me not more than a minute from the time I heard the noise of the avalanche above me, till I found myself lying deep down in a narrow crack." All estimate of distances in such circumstances must, of course, be rude guesses. Coutet's reply to the same question was this:—"I should fancy I slid down near four hundred feet, and tumbled headlong about sixty feet." I asked Julien what his thoughts were during this awkward tumble. His reply was in these words:—"Pendant que j'ai roulé j'ai dit à moi-même, 'Je suis perdu, adieu ma femme, et mes enfans!' et j'ai demandé pardon à Dieu. Je n'ai rien pensé absolument des autres."

"On coming to myself," continued honest Julien, "I was better off than I had expected. I was lying on my back, heels upward, with my head resting against the icy walls of the crack, and I could see some light and a little of the blue sky through two openings over my head. I was greatly afraid that some of my limbs had been broken, but I had sunk into the mass of soft snow, and though bruised by falling against the sides of the ice, yet nothing was broken, and in a few moments I contrived to get up on my feet. On looking up, I saw a little above me a man's head projecting from the snow. It was Marie Coutet (our captain): he was quite covered with snow up to the neck, his arms pinioned down, and his face quite blue, as if he was nearly suffocated. He called to me in a low voice to come and help him. I found a pole in the crevice, (I think not one that had belonged to the three who perished, but another;) I went to Coutet, dug round him with the baton, and in a few minutes I got Coutet clear of the snow, and we sat down together. We remained in silence looking at each other for a minute or two, thinking that all the rest were killed. Then I began to crawl up on the snow that partly filled the crack, and in climbing up, I saw above me David Coutet, who was crying, and saying, 'Mon pauvre frère est perdu!' I said, 'Non! Il est ici en bas.' (Coutet was climbing behind Julien, and so not seen at first.) Et moi j'ai dit, 'Les autres sont ils tous là en haut?' Ils ont dit, qu'il manquoit encore trois. Et j'ai demandé, 'Qui sont ils qui manquent?' Ils ont dit, 'Pierre Cairriez; Pierre Balmat; et Auguste Tairraz.' Nous avons demandé si les messieurs avoient du mal. Ils ont dit que non. Then the guide helped us to get up about fourteen feet on the solid ice. They threw us down a little axe to cut steps, and put down the end of their poles, and we two got out. We all went to search for the three others: we sounded with our poles, we cried aloud, we called them by their names, put down a long pole into the snow and listened; but all was in vain, we heard not the slightest sound. We spent two hours in this melancholy search, and by this time were well nigh frozen, for the wind was bitterly cold, our poles covered with ice, our shoes frozen as hard as horn. We were compelled to

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descend; we hurried down in perfect silence, and returned to the inn late at night."

The three poor men were all unmarried. Pierre Caitriez was a blacksmith, and his family depended on him for their main support. Julien drew a very simple but touching picture of the scene of sorrow presented when the fatal news became known to the surviving friends. These rugged brave mountaineers would face death themselves unmoved, but it was with a low voice and a glistening eye that allusion was made to the fate of their comrades, and the grief it had occasioned. The two English gentlemen contributed very generously to the relief of the distressed families.

Worthy Simeon confirmed his brother's narrative, and gave me all the particulars that fell under his own eye. He described most affectionately the despair of the bereaved friends. He tried to look perfectly unmoved, and seemed ashamed of his emotion. Yet this fine brave fellow could hardly keep from tears as he said, "La mère de Pierre Balmat se desoloit. Trois mois après elle est morte."

Such is the abstract of the story. I have before me a simple but very intelligible sketch of the relative positions which Julien made for me with his own hand, but it would be unsuitable to the present occasion, and we have already to apologize for so long a digression. This unhappy accident seems not to have been altogether what is commonly called an avalanche, but simply a part of the stratum of new snow which slipped upon the old and swept all before it in its descent. The extent of snow put in motion was estimated at about 200 feet in height, 150 in breadth, and rather more than a foot in depth. What devastation and ruin a similar accident produces, when occurring in a stratum of earth, may be seen on a small scale at the back of the Isle of Wight beyond Shanklin Chine, and on a great scale at the fearful ruins of Goldau.

But to return to our own narrative. We began gradually to draw near to this fatal spot. Julien said he thought he could certainly distinguish the crevice in which the bodies of the three guides still lie, probably embalmed and quite unaltered in a solid encasement of ice. We all recollect that the Siberian mammoth was so preserved unchanged for centuries. Coutet also thought he was sure of the spot, and cried out, "Ah! c'est là où nous sommes tombés."*

On reconnoitring the state of the slope above the crevice, the "couloir de l'avalanche," as the guides call it, it was judged to be very dangerous, being quite covered with slippery ice. It was resolved therefore that we should endeavour to strike out a new path, and attempt the ascent in a less oblique direction than Dr. Hamel had done. Accordingly, about 500 feet on the left of the fatal spot, we turned sharp round to the right, and immediately proceeded upwards toward the Rocher Rouge.

The snow was not generally up to the knees, but in some places deeper, and this made the ascent excessively fatiguing. The slope too was very steep; taking into account all the relative proportion, perhaps our little band, slowly climbing up this part of the mountain, pretty nearly resembled a detachment of ants painfully ascending the dome of St. Peter's after a snow shower. The whole side of the hill is called La Côte, of which the upper part only is properly styled La Calotte. There is no comparison between the difficulty of mounting La Côte de Mont Blanc, and the immediate cone of Vesuvius. In three quarters of an hour you can reach the top of the cone of Vesuvius. La Côte requires thrice that time, and far more than thrice the exertion.

As we slowly gained the higher portion of the mountain, the steep below became increasingly fearful. It has been called a precipice, but perhaps the word precipice is too strong, it is rather a prodigiously lofty slope, covered

* I cannot help fancying that it might still be possible to dig down into the snow and recover the bodies. We know this would be quite useless, but who does not feel that it would be a satisfaction?

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with snow, the surface of which is smooth and slippery, so that if once thrown off our feet, by a false step, we should probably have glided down an inclined plane of more than 900 feet, and then have plunged into a deep chasm at the foot. It was, therefore, very needful to be cautious, but the acclivity was by no means steep enough to produce any thing like giddiness. While we were ascending La Côte, the sun beat incessantly upon our heads, and our feet and ancles were constantly buried in snow. This, with the increasing rarefaction of the air, produced an intense head-ache, and that sort of universal uncomfortableness which generally ushers in an attack of intermittent fever. Long before reaching the top, our shoes, gaiters, &c. were frozen into one solid mass, so that the iron pike, at the end of the ice pole, would scarcely bend the leather. This incasement of our feet in icy boxes was very annoying, rendering it extremely difficult to move the ancles at all, and giving some slight sense of painful contraction at every footstep. Perhaps double upper leathers would be useful both to prevent the penetration of the snow, and to lessen the painful effect of striking the upper part of the foot against the thin exterior crust of ice in walking. In the most dangerous passes the guide judged it indispensable to cut wide footsteps with the axe. It is difficult to imagine how fatiguing this labour proved. I asked Simeon about how many steps he thought we had made? He fancied more than 400 steps, or rather holes broken with the axe. Julien's strength and invincible perseverance were here quite invaluable, but it was almost too laborious even for him. After cutting a path across an icy couloir, Julien, utterly exhausted, gave up the axe to Simeon Tournier, also a very willing, active, able guide. Tournier cut about twenty steps, and then was wholly out of breath. He called out to Julien, "Je ne peux plus," and returned the hatchet to him. The tediousness of the passage may be conceived. Simeon was generally before me, having my cord in his hand, but not fastened round him. This was judged better than tying ourselves together, from the belief that, if an avalanche came upon us, we should be more at liberty.*

Whenever we came to a dead halt for four or five minutes, which was very often the case, I begged Simeon to make a round hole n the snow; in this little cold lair I sat down and was asleep in an instant. I had too much head-ache to attend to any appearance of danger; my ideas seemed confined to these two objects, to place my foot rather cautiously, and to keep steadily onward without thinking about any surrounding danger. Young Michel Devouassou, one of the four who had never been to the summit, was behind me. He suffered more than the rest from inflammation of the eyes, but was nevertheless extremely kind and obliging, and often gave me a moment's rest by placing his baton under my foot. Every now and then Simeon gave me one raisin or one prune, and a handful of snow, which liberal allowance I received most gratefully. In truth, before gaining the summit of this slope I felt quite worn out and exhausted. At this moment I can hardly help laughing to think, that the difference between a raisin and a prune appeared something important. The mere trouble of chewing off the pulp and rejecting the stone of the prune was rather formidable. Raisins are preferable. No man that has walked up La Côte will smile at this distinction.

Beginning to draw near the Rocher Rouge, we observed, with no small surprise, that we were not the only travellers in these lofty regions. Two large birds appeared flying before us; they were black, and the quick eye of the guides made out that their feet and beaks were red. They were most probably

* I have some doubts, however, whether it would not be better to be lashed together even here. But instead of a thick rope, such as we had, it should rather be a very light strong cord than a rope. Had the whole party been tied together in the accident of 1820, would more lives have been lost, or fewer? I should rather incline to think that all would have been saved. The guides, however, thought otherwise.

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a large variety of what we call the Cornish chough, the Corvus graculus of Linnæus.*

They seemed to fly heavily in the thin air, but were soon out of sight and hid by a portion of the mountain. Dr. Paccard told me he had seen one in his first ascent; but Coutet, who had been up six times, said he had very rarely seen any bird so high. As we were very laboriously making a path toward the Rocher Rouge, and beginning seriously to doubt the possibility of reaching the summit time enough to re-descend before night, Julien observed a passage which seemed to lead more directly upward than the common track.

So far as we knew, no human footstep had ever passed across this part of the mountain, but, as every moment was most precious, it was resolved to try it at all hazards. We then avoided the Rocher Rouge altogether, leaving it about five hundred feet on our left hand, which I believe had never before been attempted, although it abbreviates the ascent considerably; a little severe climbing, and we found ourselves almost unexpectedly close to the Petit Mulet, the loftiest uncovered rock in the direct passage from Chamouni to the summit. It seems to be the summit of a colossal needle, of which the apex protrudes only a few feet above the snow. And now our long labour began to feel its reward. Here the plains of lovely Italy suddenly burst upon us. Already the eye roamed over a landscape extensive and varied beyond thought. Fatigued, faint, exhausted, and in pain as we were, I think no one regretted his toil one instant. We could now see before us the whole remaining interval to the summit; but on looking up to it, I did not yet feel quite sure of success; we had still many a weary footstep before reaching it. Hitherto we had felt scarcely a breath of air; perfect calm reigned below; but the wind now came upon us most bitterly cold, and drove a quantity of fine snow from the summit full in our faces. For a moment or two we were glad to crouch under the rocks of the Petit Mulet to escape the piercing blast: but there was no time for rest, and we hurried forward. When Dr. Paccard arrived at this spot, his hat was blown off by a sudden gust of wind, and he had the pleasure to see it wafted down several thousand feet on the Italian side toward Courmayeur, and it is probably still safe and snug in some deep crevice. Lest our hats should go to join company with his, they were additionally secured with string. Our fingers were half frozen, notwithstanding the protection of gloves, mittens, &c. but we had no leisure to think of these trifling annoyances. Honest Pierre Tairraz kept up his cheerful smile, though he evidently suffered not a little. Pierre, Julien, and I advanced arm in arm, to keep one another steady. The snow was now no longer soft; the external crust bore our weight, and it was necessary to strike the foot very firmly into the hardened snow. With the greatest exertion we could hardly stem the wind, and make a few feet progress at every start. In a few minutes we changed the arrangement. Worthy Simeon came to take place of honest Pierre Tairraz, and again we set forward. Every two or three minutes we all sunk down on the snow, quite breathless, and scarcely able to utter a word. My excellent friend, with his guide, was close to us, but in this rarefied atmosphere, at a small distance, we could not hear one another speak without great exertion. The voice sounded thin and distant. We all know the sound of a bell, in a half-exhausted receiver, upon the air-pump. I should no more have thought of calling to a guide fifty yards from me, than a man on Ben Lomond would do to a friend on the opposite summit of the Cobler.

One of the guides had some hæmorrhage from an accidental blow, not from simple rarefaction of the air. The blood appeared to me decidedly of a darker colour than natural; our lips were quite blue; our faces extremely contracted and pale, and the eyes very much sunk, with a deep dark zone beneath the lower eyelids; but no one had the least spontaneous hæmorrhage

* See Systema Naturæ, tom. i. p. 377. Corvus violaceo nigricans rostro pedibusque rubris. Habitat in Alpibus Helveticis et Noricis, Anglia, Scotia, &c.

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from the gums, or eyes. Every start we cast a longing look at the summit, and then holding our heads low, pressed onward, till the feeling of exhaustion became irresistible, and we sunk again quite flat and still upon the snow. I had a slight tendency to nausea, most overwhelming head-ache, some pain of the breast, and rather feared the rupture of a blood-vessel, having been subject to hæmoptysis when a boy, but this pain and the rapid beating of the heart went off when we stopped to rest.

When we were within a hundred yards of the summit, I felt, in addition to other unpleasant sensations, a strong tendency to faint, greater than I ever remember to have had, except once from bleeding. Even then I was uncertain whether my strength would hold out to the last. Simeon said, that about this spot, Mr. Jackson, who ascended in 1823, was quite exhausted, and cried out 'Laissez moi ici. Je ne peux plus.' Yet he was, perhaps, one of the most robust men who ever attempted the excursion.

Good Simeon was still vigorous and cheerful. 'Courage, Monsieur! Presque arrivé! Presque en haut! Allons!' Again we set forward; again we all three sunk breathless with our faces on the snow. 'Combien de fois, Simeon?' 'Deux seulement.' We rested an extra minute;—then one desperate struggle, in which every fibre was strained to bursting;—and then at last the exulting shout: "Nous avons vaincu le Mont Blanc!"

My amiable friend, Captain Sherwill, arrived at the instant, and we all sunk down together upon the summit in perfect silence. "C'etoit la plus forte sensation de ma vie." In a few moments we were able to attend to the strange scenes around and beneath us. Simeon sat by my side; and we crowded close, so as to form a snug little circle; while Coutet proceeded to deliver a short lecture on geography, to a very small audience, perched on the utmost pinnacle of Europe.*

*** We are reluctantly compelled to postpone the conclusion of this narrative till our next number.

PICCADILLY SONNETS.

No. I.

TIME, *Five o'clock,—Morning.*

SILENT is Piccadilly! Save the roll
Of some retiring carriage from some rout,
No sound is heard, no shape is seen about
But form of great-coated and grim patrole—
Or haply sleepy Senator, who hath stole
Away from dull Saint Stephen's frequent shout
Of *Question! Hear!* the assertion, and the doubt,
The orator, the proser, and the droll:
Now through the cold grey tint of sky the sun
With "shining morning face" begins to peer:
And as a faint chime through the vapour dun
From vast Saint Paul's undulates on the ear,
The hum (yet indistinct) of men, begun
Warns me that London's waking hour is near.

* The mountain has been here some thousand years, I take it. During that period there have been recorded just a dozen excursions to the summit of it. By an odd enough coincidence this happens to complete the half-dozen English visits. It is clearly hazardous for persons predisposed to pulmonary disease to take this ramble. Though I had no hæmoptysis at the time, yet the uneasy feeling in the chest continued many days, and when standing on the Lake of Geneva, taking a last long farewell of the Mountain, a small blood-vessel suddenly burst, and for some time I expected to pay rather dearly for the whim. It was currently mentioned at Chamouni that, some years ago, one or two persons had died of consumption soon after an ascent, but such an occurrence demonstrates nothing.

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NARRATIVE OF AN EXCURSION TO THE SUMMIT OF MONT BLANC.

By Dr. Edmund Clark, and Captain Markham Sherwill.

BEFORE attempting to gather up the fragments of our geographical lecture, we crave indulgent permission to say a word on the form of our young professor's elevated rostrum. The extreme summit of Mont Blanc seems to vary a good deal in its appearance. When De Saussure was here, he found no plain at all; but, in 1822, Mr. Clissold had better accommodation, for he says, "The plane of the summit was triangular, and almost equilateral, declining from its north side, which was very nearly horizontal, parallel to, and facing the valley of Chamouni; the distance from the middle of this side to the opposite angle being not less than five or six hundred feet." This area, however, he previously remarks, was greater than Coutet had ever before seen, although this was his sixth ascent. Doubtless, the fierce whirlwinds so common on the Alps, often sweep away the external crust of snow and totally alter its form; at present, it accorded much more closely with the observation of De Saussure. "On ne trouve point de plaine, sur le Mont Blanc, c'est une espece de dos d'âne ou d'arrête alongée.*

On the loftiest ridge, a column of wood was erected with vast labour, by order of Napoleon; but it soon fell from its giddy elevation, slipped over the fearful precipice, and disappeared in the gulph below, thus sharing the fate of its projector. We were afterwards told by Marie Coutet (le vieux), who assisted in raising the pile, that on the very next day after its erection it was perceived with a telescope from Chamouni to have declined sensibly from the perpendicular, and in a few days was out of sight. It was, perhaps, hardly to be expected that a column, supported only by a foundation of snow, should long resist the fury of the wind; nothing like solid rock can be perceived on any part of the immediate summit; the guides conjecture that the mass of snow may be two or three hundred feet in depth; and this, though of course a random guess, is by no means improbable; for it appears to be an irregular blunt cone of snow, the base of which is propped up by pinnacles of granite projecting through the incumbent crust, from the rocky summit of the mountain beneath.† A similar column was at the same time erected on the Buet, but we did not perceive the slightest vestige of it remaining.

Although a breathless calm had reigned all the morning below, and seemed still to continue, yet the wind on the mountain-top was strong and piercingly cold: had it increased very suddenly, we had some prospect of being swept off from our aërial post, and scattered, like dead leaves, some thousand feet below, in the valley of St. Didier. Directly over our heads the cloudless canopy of Heaven was of a very dark blue, but with a slight reddishness in the tinge, so as rather to resemble a beautiful deep violet, than indigo: had the sun been covered, this roseate tinge would doubtless have been less apparent. The extreme depth of tint cast an air of pleasing solemnity over the whole scene; though the sun was still shining in unclouded brightness, yet it was difficult to overcome the impression that the shades of evening were just at hand. Another singularity added very considerably to the solemnity of the feeling. The vault of Heaven appeared prodigiously high and distant. After two days' march upward, the blue expanse seemed to have receded from us

* Perhaps no elaborate description would convey more accurately the general figure of the mountain top, than a simple illustration that occurred to Captain Sherwill. Suppose half an orange, quite covered with melted sugar, and compressed pretty strongly between the fingers; you have thus a very tolerable imitation of the extreme summit of Mont Blanc.

† Looking down on the top of the inaccessible Aiguille Verte you remark, that it also is formed of a cone of snow, resting on a circle of granite crags.

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much faster than we had climbed toward it; in other words, the sphere of vision was enlarged, the eye appeared to pass its ordinary barrier, and to pierce more deeply into the ulterior regions of space. Now and then this phenomenon may be observed in a very slight degree on the plain, and less rarely on a clear winter night. Perhaps there are few phenomena so calculated to take an impressive hold of the imagination. In the first unsuccessful attempt to scale the mountain, this sombre and altered appearance of the heavens struck even the intrepid Chamouniards with terror and amazement, and they abandoned an enterprise which seemed to them interdicted by the frown of Heaven. At the hazard of exciting a smile, we crave to ask whether this impression was wholly to be wondered at? From their earliest infancy, the blue sky, whenever they could catch a glimpse of it, had appeared uniformly gay, and smiling, and cheerful. After much toil and danger, these hardy mountaineers arrive in regions hitherto untrodden by human footstep; they look upward, and unexpectedly the face of Heaven is become dark, and changed, and distant. What wonder if it should strike them forcibly? what wonder if it should seem to them like an angry scowl on the brow of their oldest friend? To the philosopher, who is lounging at ease on a sofa, before a warm drawing-room fire, it may not require any very prodigious effort to smile at these puerile terrors of superstition: but he should indulgently remember that there are situations considerably more appalling; that there may be circumstances in which the human mind is invincibly prone to anticipate, and wherein the feeling comes home to the bosom, that we are standing on the very verge of an untried and awful abyss; that the prospect before us is mysterious and uncertain; and that although much is to be hoped, something is also to be feared.

But this is sad digression; and we must leave our philosopher quietly musing on his warm sofa, and resume our cool seat on the snow, upon the hill-top. Upon the whole, the view from the summit of Mont Blanc exceeded our expectations, and was amply sufficient to repay us for the temporary inconveniences of the ascent. Still it is willingly conceded that the word 'beautiful' does by no means accord with the character of the scenery, and that there is, therefore, some foundation for the remarks of Dr. Ebel, "Malgré l'immensité de l'horizon," says he, "la beauté de la vue que l'on aperçoit du haut de ce colosse ne répond point à l'idée avantageuse que l'on pourrait s'en faire, soit à cause de la faiblesse de l'œil humain trop borné pour un si vaste champ, soit parce que les couches d'air qui séparent cette haute sommité du reste de la surface de la terre sont trop épaisses pour ne pas perdre une bonne partie de leur transparence." But if the claim to beauty be given up, what remains? Sublimity, fearful sublimity. How can a landscape fail to be magnificent, that embraces, in one mighty sweep, the richest and the grandest portions of European scenery; the plains of Italy on the one hand, and the whole range of the Alps on the other. It is not very easy to name a prospect with which the view from the summit of Mont Blanc admits of comparison. With the soft and lovely views from the hill of Neufchatel, or the enchanting promenade of Berne, it has few common features:—as easily might we compare the fearful fall of Handek, with the beautiful Giesbach; or the Syrens' Grotto at Tivoli, with the charming cascatelle. It approaches, however, rather more to the scene from the Righi-culm, and still more to that from the summit of the Buet, perhaps almost equalled in magnificence by the last, wherein the chain of the Mont Blanc itself forms the most striking portion of the splendid panorama.

In all high mountain scenery, every thing must of course depend on the weather; and, in this respect, we could scarcely desire a more favourable day. The zenith was constantly without a cloud, and though driving masses of mist obscured certain portions of the distant horizon, it may be doubted whether they did not augment the general sublimity of the spectacle: every Alpine tourist must frequently have remarked that the height of a mountain

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seems much increased by a zone of cloud encircling its base. Thus, partially shrouded in a dense mass of vapour, appeared lying nearly due east a colossal mass of enormous height, seeming scarcely less elevated than the post we occupied. To this majestic mountain the eye immediately turns: it will be easily guessed that the rival hill was the Mont Rosa. Our young professor told us, he had ascended one of the pinnacles, and, as he believed, the highest. There are six distinct heads, but only three of these gigantic needles now reared themselves above the thick bed of cloud. Monsieur Zumstein has made five different ascents of the mountain, and Coutet reported that the enterprise is not exceedingly dangerous. As the Mont Rosa can be sometimes seen from the gulf of Genoa, while the Mont Blanc is there invisible, this circumstance was at one time brought in support of the opinion that the Mont Rosa is really more elevated than the Mont Blanc—an opinion now universally abandoned, the question being finally at rest: but of this hereafter.

A little on this side of the Mont Rosa rise the snowy summits of Mont Cervin; then the Matterhorn and the Mont Velan; nearer, and apparently almost at your feet, lies the grand St. Bernard; but the convent itself is invisible, being hid by intervening rocks. Then to the south, and looking directly downward, at a vast depth, you range along part of the Allée Blanche, and the Lac de Combal, close to the edge of the rugged Glacier de Miage; then following down the long arm of the Glacier de Brenva, you trace it to the entrance of the Val' d'Aoste; then, beyond Commayeur, come the smiling meadows round St. Didier, with the rapid river Dora, hemmed in by the dark base of the Cramont, and looking like a petty rivulet in the deep ravine.

Then, rising from the valley, and looking clear over the summit of the Cramont, the eye roams unobstructed across the immense plains of Lombardy, till it is at last stopped by the blue hazy line of the distant Apennines. Some of the guides thought that Milan would have been seen, had not a mass of vapour covered that portion of the plains; but I believe this is an error, and that the city of Milan is wholly invisible.

Towards the Italian lakes the view was rather obscured; but in the hazy distance north of the Lago di Guarda, appeared some very lofty summits, said to be situated in the Tyrol, possibly the Oertèles? This part of the landscape was lost in indistinguishable distance, and much less interesting than the course of the noble river Po, winding along, like a silver thread, from the Mont Viso, where the main stream originates, watering all the plains of Turin, and running on to join the Ticino, from the Lago Maggiore.

In the direction of Genoa, rises a line of lofty hills, which must, I think, absolutely shut out the sea; certainly we saw it not. Yet Coutet said, he thought he once caught a glimpse of the Mediterranean in that quarter. It was, he said, about eleven in the morning, in his ascent with Captain Undrell, on the 13th of August, 1819; but Coutet spoke modestly, and did not seem disposed to insist on the point. Turning gradually round, you trace the high land above Nice, part of Provence and Dauphiné, and nearer the eye, the mountains of the Tarentaise. In the direction of Chambery was another mass of mist, so that we could not distinguish Lyons; yet I have heard from a traveller of undoubted accuracy, that, in ascending the hill above Lyons, the Mont Blanc is perfectly visible, and even the details of the mountain can be easily made out. On the road from Dijon to Genlis, the postilions tell you that the mountain is occasionally seen, and on some very favourable occasions it has been discerned at Langres, a town on the confines of Burgundy and Champagne, and distant, according to Dr. Ebel, 195 miles, in a direct line. Generally, however, the line of the Jura forms the boundary of distinct vision; and all beyond it is a mass of vapour, with only a few projecting spots barely discernible.

The Lake of Geneva seemed almost at our feet, but the town of Geneva is masked by the Grand and Petit Salève mountains. Nion you make out most distinctly, but no portion of Lausanne. Rising from the shores of the

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lake, and turning a little farther round, no words can adequately describe the solemn majesty of the scene; the whole chain of the Swiss Alps lies spread out beneath the eye. You look over the hoary summits of the Diablerets, the Ghemmi, the Jungfrau, the Eiger, the Shreckhorn, part of the Grimsel, and the Furka: a cloud covered the chain of St. Gotthard and the Simplon. Less wild, not less interesting, was the home-view of the long green valley of Chamouni, and the little clustered village, from which we were at the moment seen and counted with a telescope.* Perhaps, of all this wide and wonderful landscape, the most impressive portion of all is that just beneath your feet, looking towards the Aiguille Dru. You have the Jardin, like a little pyriform islet, and all that vast bay of untrodden snow, extending to the tremendous wall of the Grand Jorasse. Then the Aiguille du Géant, the encampment of Saussure, and the fearful passage of the Col du Géant.†

From examining the deep gulphs beneath the Col du Géant, and towards the Col de Ferret, the eye again rests on the towering summits of the Mont Rosa, and thus completes the circuit of this unrivalled panorama.

As doubts were formerly raised as to the rival claims of the Mont Blanc and the Mont Rosa, we beg leave to make a short extract from a work of paramount authority on such a subject. In the "Correspondance Astronomique, Géographique, &c. du Baron de Zach," is found the most accurate account yet published, of that once keenly contested subject. The whole paper is highly interesting, but the work is voluminous, and not very generally circulated in this country. We have only room for the summing up of the question, given by the Baron Zach, in the following words:—"Depuis un demi-siècle la hauteur du Mont Blanc occupe les géographes et les physiciens sans avoir pu arriver à un résultat bien concluant; nous n'aurons égard qu'aux mésures trigonometriques qu'on a faites en les derniers tems avec des moyens supérieurs; c'est de là qu'on a obtenu."

En 1796, M. Tralles	2468.0 toises.
En 1821, M. Carlini du Mont Colombier	2460.0
Les ingénieurs Autrichiens du Mont Trelod	2462.5
——— du perron d'Encombres	2459.9
——— du Glacier d'Ambin	2463.9
——— du Rochemelon .	2458.8
Les ingénieurs Français du Mont Granier .	2460.1
Hauteur du Mont Blanc au dessus du niveau de la mer } Milieu	2462
Nous avons trouvé sur la même voie la hauteur du Mont Rosa }	2366
Donc le Mont Blanc surpasse le Mont Rosa de .	96 toises

* A good deal of alarm prevailed among the families of the guides below, from the circumstance that only eight persons could be counted instead of nine. This gave occasion to the current rumour that some one had perished. At the moment, probably, two of the party happened to be exactly in the same line. After a little anxious delay, the whole number was distinctly made out, and the apprehensions subsided.

† Worthy Simeon had passed this tremendous ridge with the only ladies who ever crossed it; and he declared, that the dangers of that journey were scarcely, if at all, inferior to the ascent of Mont Blanc. On that very occasion, they were all, for some time, quite bewildered in a labyrinth of ice, and some of the guides became greatly alarmed; yet the party proceeded, and at last redescended in perfect safety to Commayeur. It is commonly believed, that woman's foot has never hitherto been planted on the summit of Europe. But, on this matter, we were

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Baron Zach adds, " Le procès est donc définitivement jugé que le Mont Blanc est le roi des montagnes en Europe, mais immédiatement après lui vient le Mont Rosa."*

During this survey, we were constantly exposed to the piercing wind, and part of our clothes remained frozen into a solid mass of ice. The temporary couch of snow had augmented the torpor of our feet; so that it was not without some apprehension we looked downward to our dormitory, on the Grands Mulets at a great depth below. We had been ten long hours in ascending, although then fresh and vigorous: we were now pretty nearly worn out with fatigue, and nausea, and pain; yet, unless we could contrive to descend more rapidly than we had ascended, it was clear that we should not arrive at the deep chasm, and the tottering bridge of poles, till after midnight, in which case, we must either have attempted the passage in the dark, or have slept on the snow, an alternative by no means amusing. The guides were exceedingly anxious, and we prepared to redescend, with all practicable expedition, literally marching for our lives. But one object yet remained, and for this only, we lingered a little.

At a period when the rights of society had been iniquitously invaded; when a sense of tyrannical oppression had roused the general mind to sympathy; when all men turned towards England, as the acknowledged queen and arbitress of nations; when it seemed suspended on her lightest breath, whether hundreds of thousands should perish, and the rivers of Europe be once more crimsoned with blood;—then, under the auspices of an enlightened statesman, the voice of peace prevailed: for her sake, even the momentary burst of popular indignation was disregarded; and, at the bidding of England, the general tranquillity of Europe continued undisturbed. Subsequent events have sufficiently demonstrated the sound policy of this measure, and have gone far to establish the principle, that the severest punishment of tyranny is, to leave it to the natural result of its own blindness. Meantime, the Continent remained open; its loveliest scenes were crowded with English, and the wisdom of the rulers conferred hours and days of exquisite delight on thousands of subjects. Returning from the classic regions of Italy, it seemed a pleasant object for a walk, to place the symbol of peace at the mast-head of Europe, and deposit a little memorial of the pre-eminence of England, where it may be likely to remain for centuries unmolested. For this purpose, we had gathered on the shores of the Mediterranean small branches of olive, covered with bloom-buds; and, lest a plant reared on a land of slavery and oppression, should be of unhappy augury, we had replenished our wreath with twigs of olive from the free and happy soil of Geneva:† these we had enclosed in a cylinder of glass, with the name of our king, and of his deservedly popular minister, subjoining the names of some of the remarkable persons of the age,

soon undeceived. The guides seemed not a little jealous of the honour of their fair countrywoman, and dwelt with much animation on her courage and perseverance. Some years ago, they said, during a very favourable summer, a young high-spirited girl of the valley determined to accompany a party of her friends in their ascent. On arriving at the Petit Mulet, she was excessively exhausted, and almost fainting with fatigue; yet her resolution was not shaken, and, with a little assistance from her companions, she mounted safely to the summit of Mont Blanc, and redescended unhurt to the valley. Her real name is, *Maria Paradis*, but since that time she has been invariably called *Maria de Mont Blanc*.

* We shall not adduce an imperfect barometrical observation in support of these trigonometrical measurements, lest, perchance, we should merit the imputation of trying to prop a pyramid with an oat-straw. The conclusion, however, is sufficiently satisfactory, that, beyond all shadow of dispute, our hill is the highest.

† Although the fruit is not perfected, yet the olive plant grows luxuriantly in the beautiful Botanical Garden of Geneva.

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whether high in honour, as enlightened politicians, revered as sincere and eloquent theologians, admired as elegant poets, useful as laborious physicians, or adorning the walks of private life by the mingled charm of urbanity, gentleness, accomplishments, and beauty. Having reached the loftiest uncovered pinnacle of Mont Blanc towards England, the land of our hopes, we selected a little spot, sheltered from the storm by incumbent masses of granite, and there buried, deep in the snow, an humble record, but sincere: hermetically sealed down by an icy plug, covered with a winter's snow, and perhaps gradually incorporated into the substance of a solid cube of ice, it may possibly remain unaltered for many centuries, like the insects preserved in amber, and so bear witness to distant generations, when other proud memorials have crumbled into dust.

During this little operation, honest Julien, who did not wholly partake the enthusiasm of the thing, occasionally exclaimed, "Depechez-vous, Monsieur; si nous ne sommes pas arrivés avant le coucher du soleil; peut-être nous n'y serons jamais." There seemed a good deal of reason in this hint; and hastily putting on the ropes, we rapidly descended the steeps of La Côte, which had cost us so much fatigue in the morning. We generally followed exactly the footsteps cut in our ascent, and this abbreviated the labour greatly. But, not far from the spot at which Mr. Clissold had nearly perished, an ugly accident happened to my obliging companion: he made a false step, and but for the interposition of the rope, and the dexterity of the guides, would have fallen a fearful distance, to the foot of La Côte, and ended his ramble and his life together. Happily, he was safely drawn up, and we continued our course with a little more caution, but still using our utmost expedition. When we reached the Grand Plateau, many of the uneasy sensations experienced on the summit had subsided; and where the declivity was easy, we almost ran without any other inconvenience, than now and then a tumble up to the middle in a drift of snow. We reached the edge of the chasm a little before sunset, were lowered with ropes to the little icy ledge; then helped the last man to scramble down, placed our poles as securely as possible to form a bridge, and lightly walked over as before. This formidable passage once cleared, we had no other serious difficulties; and before it grew quite dark, we were once more safely landed on the Grands Mulets rocks. We changed our clothes, and then lay down instantly on our stony couch; and surely never was bed of down more exquisitely delicious. The night before, the rocks re-echoed with our merriment; but now, all were too tired to talk. My foot seeming a little frost-bitten, I begged Simeon to rub it with snow, and no ill consequence followed, except the loss of the skin. Supper was quickly prepared, and, not having eaten three ounces during a walk of fourteen hours, I begged him to see what could be had. Simeon went off to reconnoitre the contents of the black kettle, and returned in a few minutes; but, in the interval, I had fallen fast asleep, and, as he afterwards told me, could not be waked. After a nap of two minutes, as I thought, but I believe nearer two hours, I waked up, and with great consternation found supper over, and every body quiet; so I had nothing for it but to go to sleep again too, and wait till next morning.

On Saturday we were in no great hurry to leave the rocks, but took our breakfast at leisure, and then busied ourselves in collecting minerals and a few plants;* these, with the specimens brought from above, filled the sacks almost as heavily as before. The morning was still fine, but the snow so much softer, that Julien thought we should not have succeeded in reaching the top, had we delayed even one day. Having thus far been preserved from every serious accident, we repeated our cautions to the guides, and entreated them to run no unnecessary risk. To have lost the life of a guide, or even

* Some short account of the minerals and plants of Mont Blanc we reserve till another occasion.

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occasioned the fracture of a limb, at the close of an expedition hitherto so successful, would have turned our exultation into regret, and embittered the remembrance of our journey for the rest of our lives. We determined, therefore, to make a wide circuit, rather than descend the steep part of the Grands Mulets. In this way we avoided much difficulty and danger, and proceeded very gaily. We slid down some of the slopes with so much velocity, as to produce momentary nausea, but without danger. It is of the utmost moment, on all accounts, to keep on the rope; for once or twice we had nearly sunk through a thin crust of snow over a concealed chasm. Getting near the edge of the glacier, we found the difficulty rather greater than we had found on entering; and, for some little time, it seemed very doubtful whether we might not be shipwrecked in sight of land, but at length, about noon, we stepped from the last rock of ice upon the solid rock, having been more than forty-eight hours upon the snowy desert, without the slightest injury; for no one had suffered even the inconvenience of a sprain; only young Michael Devouassou had some inflammation of the eyes, which was soon removed by a little cooling lotion, when we got to the inn. Our appearance, however, was sufficiently ludicrous, most of us having our faces exceedingly swelled, red, and cracked: craving pardon for the vanity of the comparison, we should say, that they resembled a good deal the stump of an old red fir-tree, with copious exudations of resin distilling through the rugged bark. This circumstance, however, did not much annoy us, and I suppose a happier group there was not in Europe that morning. With great delight we trod once more on the green turf, as we made our way among the rhododendron shrubs. Having lingered behind to fill my handkerchief with mosses and plants, my comrades had advanced some distance. I observed them sitting down under the first fir-tree we came to, and something white beside them. On a nearer approach, great indeed was my surprise to see all the materials of breakfast spread for us, as if by magic, on the soft moss. But our surprise and pleasure were yet to be increased; for we found, that for this most unexpected feast, we were indebted to the kindness of a stranger, and a woman; and that too, no other than that very Maria de Mont Blanc, of whose adventurous ramble we have before spoken. Maria had come up to meet us with a female companion, bringing bread, milk, butter, and delicious cream for the whole party. These we found spread out, with neat little black basins, upon a clean white cloth. They, and they only, who have been in similar circumstances, can at all imagine the glow of pleasure which this little act of kindness and courtesy excited in us all. Many reasons combined to render it to me exquisitely delightful. We all sat down on the green mossy turf, and were happier than the kings of the earth. Having finished a substantial breakfast, we prepared to descend to the valley; and it will easily be believed that we loaded Maria with our ardent thanks, and made her every other little return of gratitude in our power. Having regained the valley, we were not sorry to find two mules in waiting, sent there by the kind attention of the provident *guide-chef*. We mounted, and slowly filed along the valley, surrounded by groups of villagers, who came with nods and smiles to congratulate us on our safe return. Thus escorted, we arrived at the hotel, where a great number of travellers were assembled, and soon forgot all the fatigues of our journey, in the comfortable vanity of telling them to others.*

* In the present state of the mountain, we do not think the ramble by any means to be advised to the fair traveller: not to mention the accidents against which no forethought can provide, the severe and prolonged exertion would ill suit the delicacy of the female constitution, and might be attended with serious results. A walk to the Jardin or the Buet, though both are excessively fatiguing, might yet, perhaps, amply repay the toil. We think no lady should, on any account, venture on a long expedition upon the ice or snow, without the precaution of a safety-rope in the hand of an attentive guide. To render this more agreeable,

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SKETCHES OF PARISIAN SOCIETY, POLITICS, & LITERATURE.

Paris, September, 18, 1826.

Such is the singular character of the French people, that odious imputations produce little or no effect among us. If a man is said to be a robber or a murderer, such an accusation, far from amusing, excites painful feelings in the person who hears it. The serious nature of such a charge renders it doubtful, and if it be proved, the impression it produces is only the more disagreeable. What, indeed, can be more revolting than the ideas excited by atrocious crimes?

If you wish to ruin your enemy in France, do not accuse him of having robbed the unfortunate Greeks of ten thousand pounds, or of having become the heir of a wealthy man with whom he travelled in Switzerland, and who, on the eve of his departure placed all his property in the hands of his travelling companion. The surer way of ruining a man is to render him ridiculous. The more light and frivolous the accusation brought against him, the greater is its effect; for in France we do not like to have our indignation too violently excited. M. Dupin, the celebrated advocate, held in his hand one of the tassels of the canopy in the procession of the Jesuits at St. Acheuil. This ridiculous adventure of the liberal advocate, who has been so much noticed by the Constitutionnel, will be laughed at for twenty years to come. Had the enemies of M. Dupin accused him, justly or unjustly, of any great crime,

it might be attached to a firm broad band, encircling the person, and as a tight ligature, impeding respiration, becomes intolerable at great elevations, the band should be free and easy, and may be rendered secure from falling, by crossing belts over the shoulder. These precautions would have the advantage of ensuring the wearer's safety, of making her feel secure and at ease, to enjoy the scenery, and of lessening the anxiety of attendant friends. In crossing tracts of snow, a veil is useful; but a better thing, by far, is a mask. Those of wire gauze, seem very good. Blue spectacles would be found invaluable; better far, we apprehend, than even the wire-gauze preservers for the eyes.

With respect to the ascent of Mont Blanc, the writer will, at all times, be happy to render any the slightest assistance to those who may be disposed to the attempt. At the same time, he must honestly avow, that as a mere ramble to gratify curiosity, the excursion deserves no credit, and perhaps is barely justifiable. The danger to the traveller is by no means so great as to the guides; these are generally married men, and in case of accident, what pecuniary relief could compensate the bereavement or soften the bitterness of the retrospect? We felt this strongly, on going down to worthy Simeon's cottage, one fine evening, after our descent. His young wife came out to show us his smiling infant, and to bring us a bowl of fresh goat-milk, at the same time strongly expressing the anxiety which she had suffered during our absence. I should greatly hesitate before asking a married man to join in such an expedition again.

Should the interests of science require an ascent, then the matter is wholly altered. Any young man, of ordinary health and vigour, may accomplish it. I should think it well worth investigation whether there may not be found a passage east of the Rocher Rouge. If it should be so, then both the labour and the danger will be so diminished, that by erecting stations at intervals, and throwing pines over some of the chasms, the summit of Europe may, at length, be rendered easily accessible.

We would again caution the inexperienced traveller against the use of spirituous liquids, at any rate until his wine is frozen. *Vin ordinaire* forms the best common drink in the ascent.

One other remark, which may not be uninteresting. Of our guides, Marie Contet is excellent; Julien Devouassou, very good; Pierre Tairraz le jeune, a noble fellow; but, for mingled kindness, gentleness, attention, and courage, Simeon Devouassou is really superior, and admirably suited to attend an invalid.

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A VISIT TO THE SUMMIT OF MONT BLANC, BY CAPTAIN MARKHAM SHERWILL,

25th, 26th, and 27th of August, 1825.

In Letters addressed to a Friend, by Captain Markham Sherwill.

[The following narrative will doubtless be read with a degree of interest equal to that which was excited by the former account of the same ascent; and our readers, we think, will regard, with curiosity, the different effects produced by the same scenes on the minds of the two writers.]

Letter I.

My dear Friend,—When I quitted you for a second ramble through Switzerland and Savoy, the intention of ascending Mont Blanc had certainly never entered into my remote speculation, and much less into the plan of my proceedings. Yet as you have frequently requested to con over the notes of my summer's excursion, and I have nothing just now more interesting to send you, I am induced to select a few short memoranda of that ascent for your amusement.

On the 22d of August, 1825, I left Geneva with a friend, having determined to visit the valley of Chamouni before making an excursion to the Oberland. Passing through Bonneville and Sallenche, we slept the first evening at St. Gervais. The Hotel de Montjoie, in the village of St. Gervais, we found exceedingly agreeable, and strongly recommend it: the traveller will find comfortable rooms, great cleanliness, good and reasonable fare, and, in Madame Rosset, a very obliging agreeable hostess. From this inn, moreover, you get a charming view of the mountains with the Aiguille de Varens and the Cime des Fours, soaring to near one thousand four hundred toises above the level of the sea.

We continued our route to Chamouni, only staying to visit the beautiful Cascade de Chêde; and, immediately on reaching the Hotel de l'Union, endeavoured to see Marie Coutet, one of the guides. Next morning, Coutet went with me to visit the Mer de Glace, and the source of the Arveron. In the course of this walk, he mentioned to me that there was then at Chamouni a young English physician who was preparing to ascend Mont Blanc alone, having hitherto in vain sought for a companion. Coutet said he had consented to go, and strongly pressed me to be of the party. Without any very strong intention of making the attempt, I was induced to ask a good many questions about the practicability of the thing. As we sat on a large block of granite near the source of the Arveron, a mass of ice suddenly slipped from the Glacier des Bois, and fell with thundering roar, loudly reverberating along the sides of La Flecière. As I was strongly expressing my admiration and pleasure, Coutet said with a smile, "Ah! Monsieur! ce n'est rien! pour voir les avalanches il faut vaincre le Mont Blanc!" I rose from my granite seat half resolved on the attempt, and we returned to the hotel. Having obtained an interview with Dr. Clark, I expressed my wish to join in the expedition, and was immediately relieved from all embarrassment by the kind manner with which my propositions were received. We talked the matter over, and held farther consultations with Coutet. It was now about four o'clock on Wednesday the 24th of August, and it was equally Dr. Clark's wish and my own to leave the hotel before dawn, that we might avoid the disagreeable heat. The thermometer was then at seventy degrees Fahrenheit, and had varied from seventy to eighty degrees during the last few days. But as two more guides were to be hired and more provisions to be cooked, it was declared impossible that we should set out before six o'clock next morning. While Coutet was busy in preparing food, ropes, warm clothes, &c. we were equally busy in selecting the proper number of efficient guides to accompany us. The following seven, after some difficulty, were engaged.

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1. Joseph Marie Coutet, son of Coutet, who accompanied Monsieur de Saussure—he had been to the summit six times, and failed in four other attempts.
2. Pierre Tairraz, the younger, up once, aged thirty-nine, and single.
3. Simeon Devouassou, up once, aged thirty, married.
4. Julien Devouassou, brother of the above, never up, married, aged thirty-six.
5. Simon Tournier, never up, single, aged twenty-eight.
6. Michel Devouassou, never been up, married, aged twenty-five.
7. Pierre Joseph Simond, never been up, married, aged thirty-six.

Thursday, 25th August, 1825.—I awoke early in the morning, and soon made myself ready for our undertaking. It will be seen by the above list of guides, that five of the seven were married men. It was of course very natural they should take more time, in bidding to their wives and children an affectionate farewell, in a case like the present, than if they were merely going to the Tête Noir, or Col de Balme; and the single men might possibly have friends to whom a tender adieu was equally requisite. It was therefore seven o'clock when Dr. Clark and myself mounted our mules. The guides had each a knapsack containing provisions, wine, &c., and over their shoulders were slung ropes, hatchets, and poles, all necessary implements to storm the lofty citadel. The summer having been very propitious for the visitors to Chamouni, the number of strangers was scarcely ever known to have been greater, and nearly every one was on the alert to see us depart. Indeed, many accompanied us over the bridge opposite the inn, and continued with us some little way along the valley to the right, in the direction of the small hamlet called "Les Pelerins," where we arrived in about half an hour at the house of Coutet, our principal guide. Here we remained some short time, while we gave directions to his brother at what hours he was to take notes of the variations in the barometer and thermometer during our absence; for Coutet is well provided with these instruments, which he has received as presents from various English gentlemen with whom he has travelled over the adjacent mountains, in testimony of their approbation of his amiable manners and good conduct.

The barometer which we took with us was a very good one, made in Geneva, of a construction capable of marking a great depression of the mercury; and at Les Pelerins it stood at twenty-five inches, one line and one-tenth. The thermometer marked fourteen degrees Reaumur. The valley of Chamouni is about 337 French toises above the level of the Lake of Geneva, consequently 524 toises above the Mediterranean Sea. Having made our final arrangements, we re-mounted our mules, and began to ascend the foot of the south-west end of the Montanvert, traversing a forest of dark pines, between which we occasionally saw the lofty columns of the Glacier de Bossons, or Buissons, distant about twenty or thirty paces from us, on our right hand,—

> —— "Midst fearful sights,
> Of pines uprooted by the blast; the rush
> Of mighty floods; and thunder-riven rocks
> That skirt the fetter'd waves of Montanvert."

We continued to wind along a serpentine path, amid large blocks of granite, which are continually rolling down from what the guides call "les Moraines," that is, the vast heaps of sand and stones on either side of the Glacier, whose devastating march carries with it immense blocks of stones from the various adjacent peaks. No one should quit the valley of Chamouni without visiting and crossing the Glacier des Bossons, about half an hour's walk above the hamlet of Les Pelerins; it is somewhat difficult for ladies, but I have crossed it with two, who were remarkably good walkers, and we descended on the side nearest to the Glacier de Tacconai.

We could not help remarking, as we continued to ascend the difficult and narrow path, how cheerful the guides appeared; they were all in

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eager conversation on trivial subjects, wholly unconnected with the arduous expedition they had to encounter. Towards nine o'clock, we arrived at the Châlet de la Part, a single hut, where, as is usual in these mountain cottages, cows and goats are housed for the night:—they generally consist of one room divided by a low partition; in one half of it the cheese is made from the animals which occupy the other apartment. The man or woman, who may have the charge of the whole, sleeps on a kind of shelf. Pails, presses, sieves, boilers, &c. &c. are among the accessories of these lightly built châlets. We found a girl of about eighteen years of age in this hut, busily employed in making cheeses; she was surprised to see so large a party in so unfrequented a spot, but kindly gave us some delicious goat's milk; her countenance was naturally agreeable, and she was evidently desirous to give us any thing her humble abode could afford. We shook her heartily by the hand, and she bade us good-b'ye with many kind wishes that we might return safely: we mounted our mules, and continued our route. Immediately on quitting this Châlet de la Part, we saw a fine reservoir through which a mountain streamlet ran. Here large tin cans of milk and cream were kept sheltered from the rays of a scorching sun: it was about five feet square, rudely built of irregular stones, but sufficiently united to retain from two to three feet of water.

The mountains on the opposite side of the valley began to diminish, L'Aiguille de Vareus above the village of St. Martin was visible. The valley of Chamouni now lay at our feet, in which we could distinctly see the cottages without the aid of our glasses. The path became very rugged and difficult, until we arrived at a large rock called "La pierre pointue," where we dismounted from our mules at ten o'clock: these were re-conducted to Chamouni by a ruddy-cheeked girl, to whom we gave a note or two, written in pencil, to our friends whom we had left at the inn. Our mules having hitherto carried some of our luggage, we halted a short time that the guides might arrange it. Coutet, with the aid of his telescope, distinctly saw persons on the summit of Mont Breven, across the valley, and directly opposite to us. Some one of that party had hoisted a white hat on a pole, as a signal of salutation, which we returned. We afterwards learned, that thirty persons had been on the top of Mont Breven, which is 1306 toises above the sea, in order to observe our progress.

We now began to traverse on foot some very rugged places, where vegetation had nearly ceased, though still a few of the Alpine plants were to be found in sheltered crevices of the barren rocks. On turning round the brow of the mountain, we discovered a herd of goats scattered above and below us, which belonged to the Châlet de la Part; but no bird, or living thing else, was there. Our path lay at the edge of a precipice which appeared somewhat dangerous to pass, for the roaring water was about 1500 feet below us, and issued from a part of the Glacier des Bossons, which we were now fast approaching. Considerable quantities of loose stones, chiefly of granite, of which these mountains are composed, impeded us very much; we suddenly lost all the former appearances of a path, which was merely a track made by the goats, and marked by vegetation. We were probably between six and seven thousand feet above the valley, and nearly on a level with the Mont Breven. After climbing a considerable ascent, we reached what is termed "La pierre de l'Echelle" at eleven o'clock, and immediately repeated the signal to our friends on the Breven, whom, with Coutet's excellent glass, we could see to be numerous. We soon made preparations for a substantial breakfast; and placing ourselves behind the great stone called "La pierre de l'Echelle," we felt great security from the avalanches, which fall hereabouts continually from the lower parts of the Aiguille du Midi. This stone is of granite, of about fifty feet perpendicular height, and seems well secured and supported. At this spot we found the porters who had preceded us with a part of the baggage, in order to lessen the weight of the guides. We remained at this breakfast-place an hour, and just before we

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renewed our march, Dr. Clark and I felt the pulses of several of the guides, and found them to vary from eighty-four to one hundred and four pulsations in a minute, but my own was as high as one hundred and eight, and this after we had rested an hour. During our repast, Coutet entertained us with several mountain anecdotes, and related very circumstantially the fatal attempt to ascend Mont Blanc in 1820, when three of the guides who accompanied Dr. Hamel were swept away by an avalanche, and have never since been found.

Coutet was himself of the same party, and was driven by the snow into the same deep crevice where his companions were killed, but not being so immediately in the main body of the avalanche, he was extricated after having been an hour and half a prisoner in the gulph. In another expedition, he was overtaken by a fall of rocks and stones, when both his legs were badly broken in various places. In a third excursion, many of his fingers suffered, and bear to this day evident marks of the accident he encountered. I mention these facts to prove the undaunted courage and perseverance of Coutet, who persists in his office of guide from a natural and innate love of a mountain life, more than from a love of gain; for he could earn a very good livelihood from his ability and adroitness in cutting and polishing pebbles, &c.

Before we quitted La pierre de l'Echelle, one of the guides fired a pistol, there being a remarkable repetition of an echo at that spot; but our attention was more attracted by the sudden appearance of four white ptarmigans, or rock grouse, "Tetrao Lagopus" of Linnæus, a feather of which I was enabled to secure. Every thing being once more in readiness, we bade adieu to the porters who were to descend; we shook each other heartily by the hand, and threw aside all distinction; we were all brothers in one pursuit, and determined to proceed as far as prudence and safety would permit. The guides now obliged us to hurry during a quarter of an hour, and to proceed without the least noise, lest we should be surprised on our rugged way by the fall of an avalanche. These, I have before stated, occur very frequently at this spot, and it is ascertained that a sudden concussion or vibration of the air will certainly set in motion those which are ready to fall. It was very fortunate that we proceeded thus cautiously at this place, as will be seen a little farther on in the narrative.

By one o'clock we arrived at the edge of the Glacier des Bossons, the first snow and ice we had to encounter; and having added to our shoes the necessary spikes, or crampons, we once again set forward. Two guides preceded us, and kept generally in advance about twenty or thirty paces, to reconnoitre and point out the most practicable line of march; two more followed in the same track; Dr. Clark and his guide came next; I followed with mine, and one brought up the rear. The height calculated at which snow ceases to melt, is about 1400 toises, but this must vary according to the situation of the mountain. If the actual height of a mountain is 1400 toises, or even a little more, the snows will wholly disappear, if the season is such as the last proved to be: for the Aiguille de Varens, and la Cime des Fours near Sallenche, having no higher mountain immediately near them, so that they have not a continued cold air blowing on them, I found to be totally free from snow this summer. If, however, a mountain is 1400 toises high, and has still more lofty ones all round it, certainly the snow will not melt, whatever the heat of the summer may be. On ascending the Glacier des Bossons, we found what may fairly be termed eternal snow, and though we had not yet accomplished 1400 toises, yet the surrounding mountains being so considerably higher, cause the snow to remain without change except during an hour or two in the hottest days. The day was remarkably fine, some light clouds were hovering around the summit of Mont Blanc, but they indicated good weather. The opposite mountains were clear; we could distinguish the rivulet which feeds the Cascade de Chêde near that village; and many of the higher peaks of the range of hills above Sallenche were distinct, as well as Mont Buet. On proceeding over the terrific Glacier

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des Bossons, strict injunctions were given to us by the guides, not to deviate from the track of the two leading men, who continued to sound the snow with their poles before they set their feet down. The utmost caution and prudence are necessary in this respect; for in a thousand places over which we passed, we found nothing to walk on but an overhanging drift, or shelf of snow, which partially hid from our view caverns and crevices of from one hundred to two hundred feet deep. In case the first guide should suddenly fall into one of these depths, the object of the rope by which he is affixed to the second is apparent; for he, being in advance eight or ten paces, would immediately be held up by the other, until sufficient aid could be afforded by the whole party to save him from destruction. We therefore continued in a single line, following the footsteps of our foremost man. These drifts of overhanging snow are denominated bridges by the guides; but in many cases they do not allow more than one person to cross them at a time, as the additional weight of a second might destroy the ridge, and thus cut off the communication of the party at least for a considerable time. Your pole is your only support, a slow and steady step essential, and your eye must carefully guide your foot, never varying your step from the track the leading guides have made.

We continued to cross this majestic though frightful glacier during four hours. Occasionally we were detained a quarter of an hour, and oftentimes more, standing in the snow nearly up to our knees, while the foremost guides were actively employed in cutting steps with the hatchet in the almost perpendicular walls of ice. These walls are, in fact, the sides of the crevices in the glaciers, such as you must remember to have seen in the Mer de Glace; but the Mer de Glace, compared to the rugged chasms and crevices of the Glacier des Bossons, is scarcely rougher than a plain gravel walk, or a frozen pond. Our difficulties encreased as we continued to advance on this fearful glacier. The crevices became considerably wider than we had hitherto found them, and the irregularities on the surface of the ice very troublesome and perplexing. These crevices presented themselves at every twenty or thirty paces; and often the narrow walls of ice which divided them were so slippery, that it required the utmost care and caution to walk along their edge. The depth of them we could not at all times measure, except in cases where we descended into them, in order to avoid a long circuitous route, which might have terminated in similar difficulties: in such a case, after descending we mounted the opposite wall. The deeper we found the crevices, the darker was the shade of green which we observed in the ice; and particularly, in looking into the arched caverns, we noticed that the colour was still darker.

The elegance and beauty which Nature has given to these regions no pen, no pencil can pourtray; nor can the mind easily imagine them. In real truth, how is it possible to describe objects which have no resemblance to any thing else we see in the daily course of life? It is not possible to convey to you a just idea of the sensations I experienced on viewing beauties and horrors thus closely combined. The contrast of the spotless white of the snows, for nothing exists in these regions to soil them, with the dark and sombre colour of the surrounding peaks and pinnacles, has no equal: the constant rushing of the waters in hidden channels beneath our feet, the purity of the air, the cloudless sky and brilliant sun which favoured us, and gave to every object an extraordinary vivacity,—all these lent their aid to heighten the magnificence of the scene. It would be a very great pleasure to me if I could give you a just description of the caverns of ice, many of which we passed in our second day's journey over the Glacier des Bossons. Their entrance is adorned with the largest and strongest icicles I ever saw, some twenty, some thirty feet long, and thick in proportion, with smaller ones projecting from their sides; they are pure as the brightest crystal. These icicles hang from the top and arched entrance of the caverns; and when the sun has sufficient power to melt a small quantity of the finer

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snow, it drips from these stalactites, and, falling to the foot of the entrance, again freezes, and forms itself into reversed icicles, with their points upwards; and thus they are placed like a double row of spikes, to prevent the traveller from entering into these abodes of death. I was very anxious to penetrate one of these wonderful caverns; but, as such an undertaking would have cost us more time than we could give without the risk of being too late in the evening among the dangers and difficulties we had yet before us, the guides dissuaded me, saying that they had never explored them. Danger there can be none, for the solidity of the arches would probably be sufficient for any weight over them; and there can be no chance of their falling but by an imperceptible movement of the glacier. How brilliant would these diamond caves be by torch-light! how magnificently has Nature dressed these her secret closets! In some cases the ice assumes the form of the most elegant drapery, and hangs over the arch in festoons of a transparent beauty not to be imagined; in others it is fringed, and resembles the light and airy form of feathers, without being attached apparently to the solid ice: but alas! these all change in a few hours, for if the sun has much power, so fragile and tender is their fabric, that they disappear and perish, soon to re-assume a figure perhaps still more elegant. We were obliged to pass through one of these arches, as it formed a bridge, and was perforated, so that, instead of crossing it by the top, we crept through it; but its appearance was less elegant than the larger ones. This arch was not more than four feet high, but turned with great truth:—the largest we saw was not less at its opening than twenty feet high; as to the depth, or extent, we knew nothing, not being able to examine it; but we could not see the end of the cavern,—it was dark beyond, and glittering at the entrance. The constant murmuring of water in the interior of these glaciers has a singular sound. While we were standing on a plane surface of ice and snow, we listened for a considerable time with great attention—the noise appeared to proceed from a very great depth, and the waters seemed escaping or forcing their way through the hidden channels with great difficulty, something like the boiling of water in a large vessel, having its lid very closely shut down. In places these rivulets were visible. The water was always as pure as the crystal channels through which it hurried on, and we seldom failed to partake of it, mixing either wine or vinegar in our glasses,—as you may suppose it was always ice-cold. It is generally at the bottom of a crevice, or in a valley of ice, that these streams or small pools are to be met with; but the heat we found to be most oppressive in such confined places, for there is no free circulation of air, but a reverberation of the rays of the sun from the snow, which materially injures the eyes, and blisters the skin of the face; for although we wore green spectacles, and thick veils, our faces were sufficiently disfigured for some time after our descent.

We continued to ascend mountains of ice, and descend into crevices, occasionally traversing the fragile bridges of snow already described, when, about four o'clock, we found ourselves at the foot of an almost perpendicular line of rocks, which rose abruptly out of the Glacier des Bossons, or rather between that and the Glacier de Tacconai. These rocks are known by the name of "Les Grands Mulets," to distinguish them from some other granite projections called "Les Petits Mulets," of which you will hear more by and by.

The Grand Mulets are very easily to be seen from Chamouni, and were pointed out to me by Coutet on quitting the Union Inn in the morning, as the hotel where we should sleep the first night. At the base of this our intended dormitory, the guides were not quite agreed as to the best means of storming it. Coutet would not at first consent to our ascending by the almost perpendicular side near which we stood, which was perhaps three hundred feet high. He urged our making a circuit of about one hour's march, and by these means overcoming part of the ascent by a gradual inclination. Coutet said, that we should find, in ascending "Les Grands Mulets," a great

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quantity of loose or detached stones, of which many were in a decomposed state, and that our footing would be very unsafe. He preferred the circuitous route, unless he should find the fresh-fallen snow too deep, in which case he would ascend by the side where we then stood. The other guides, however, overruled his objections, and our operations began by one of our hardy guides advancing about thirty paces up the rock, clearing away, as he went, such stones as might prove treacherous to our footing. Dr. Clark followed his guide at a distance of six or eight steps, the guide holding securely in his hands a rope to which my friend was now and then attached. I followed, attached with a rope to my guide; and so we all advanced to the small landing-place where the foremost man stood. The leading guide then recommenced his ascent, not daring to move while we were exposed to the falling stones, some of which were sufficiently large to have carried us off with them. You will be able to judge a little of the difficulty of climbing this rock, when I tell you, that we were more than an hour in reaching the summit, occasionally swinging in the air suspended by ropes, where there was scarcely footing for a chamois. It was beginning to be extremely cold, and we felt the evening wind severely, after having been in exercise all day, so that these operations were not very amusing.

I can assure you, my dear friend, that we were not a little rejoiced to find ourselves on something like level ground; for within about ten feet of the top of "Les Grands Mulets" there is a projection, where we were to halt for the night. We began to clear away the snow, and level the loose stones, so as to make our bed as comfortable as the space would admit, which was twenty feet long and five broad. On three sides we could look over the precipices we had climbed, and the fourth side was still a higher part of the rock, of about ten feet. We hung up the barometer, the mercury of which had already sunk to nineteen inches three-tenths. The thermometer marked eight degrees, of Reaumur, above zero. These observations were made at six o'clock in the evening. We had been from Chamouni nearly ten hours, and the guides consider this spot about half-way. They were now occupied in lighting a fire with some dry wood, which they had collected before they gained the glacier; and soon we saw the saucepan, filled with snow, placed over it to melt, for water was not to be had on this elevated spot. You will remember that this excursion was undertaken in the month of August, consequently the days were still long and the weather remarkably fine. We saw close to us our guides seated round a fire, with a cheerful smile on their countenances, mixing their wine and snow-water, and beginning to eat their supper, of which we partook, and indeed enjoyed it very much. The sun was still shining bright, and I walked to the end of our little platform to take a general view of the country. I could distinctly see the track we had left in many places over the snow; and though nine persons had traversed the dreary plain, the mark of our footsteps appeared as if some one solitary traveller had been wandering "in endless mazes lost," so zigzag was the direction. The Lake of Geneva was very distinctly seen by the naked eye; and as the day closed, and that part of the country lay in shade, its long line grew still bright, and looked like a sheet of silver,—a very curious and pleasing effect. The town of Geneva was not visible, owing to the chain of mountains that runs in a north-east direction from L'Aiguille de Varens, which reared its bleak summit between us and the setting sun. More in a north-easterly direction we perceived the Ghemmi, as well as the Mont Buet, covered with snow, like the former; and still more on our right, behind our rock, the mitre-shaped Aiguille du Midi upheaved its lofty head. Opposite to us was the Dôme de Goûté, one of the shoulders of Mont Blanc; and owing to its proximity to our place of rest, it appeared more majestic than the summit itself. With Coutet's glass, my own not being of sufficient power, we could distinguish persons walking on the bridge of Chamouni. The houses appeared mere specks in the valley; and the Arve, like a white thread on a green carpet.

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The whole scene inspired a very peculiar feeling. The profound silence which reigns in these regions of solitude is perhaps the most impressive circumstance. It is a silence which is never disturbed but by the falling of the mighty avalanches as they roll from some neighbouring mountain or precipice, or when the storms and winds, clothed in fury, sweep over these uninhabited worlds. But the beauty of the setting sun, and the solemnity of the still evening, I could almost say created in me a sensation of terror. The vapour, or light clouds, which were in some places between us and the valley, partook of the glowing colour of the last rays of the sun, while on the snows above us there was still a deeper tint of crimson. I reflected on the peaceful and smiling valley we had so lately quitted, its flowers and cultivation, its happy and tranquil peasantry; and was almost inclined for a moment to think we were transported to some uninhabited world which had been forgotten by Nature.

As soon as our guides had finished their evening repast, they began to arrange our tent, if so I may call it. We placed two or three poles in a slanting direction, leaning against the rock which projected above our heads; over these poles was spread a sheet to keep off the dew and extreme cold. Under this covering we lay down on a blanket, and had one other blanket to cover us.

Before retiring to rest I looked at the thermometer, and found at eight o'clock it had fallen to zero, but we had fortunately no wind to encrease the cold: had it blown with any degree of violence, our ill-secured tent would have been unable to withstand its force, and we should have been wholly exposed to the severity of the night. Thus arranged, we lay down, and, though somewhat fatigued, I felt a reluctance to sleep. I could see from beneath the sheet, which but ill-fitted its present destination, the moon rising in all its beauty, the wide-extended plains of snow, the glittering Glacier de Tacconai, and some distant mountain-peaks. One or two of our guides had crept into our tent, and lay across our feet; others were lying around the dying embers of the fire, or had found a hole of shelter beneath. They were asleep, and seemed unconscious of the lonely and silent regions on which they were intruders like ourselves: all was still. Nature, like them, seemed wrapped in one eternal sleep. This was a moment when the mind could not avoid reflecting on its insignificancy when compared with the wonders surrounding it on every side. In such a situation who could help pondering a little, with a confused imagination, but still with cheering hope, on his origin, his destination, and his God? I was impressed with something like awe, and felt alone, as it were, in the midst of darkness, perhaps of death!

At length I fell asleep, more from fatigue than a desire to close my train of thought. Soon after ten o'clock I awoke with considerable nausea at the stomach, which continued unabated during the night. I called to Coutet, who gave me a glass of wine. He advised me to get up, but I felt too unwell. The continued thunder of the avalanches which fell from the sides of the Aiguille du Midi, assisted to disturb the silence of the night; and the echo playing from rock to rock, had scarcely ceased its sound, before a second would add its tumultuous noise, and left a degree of terror which deprived me of all desire to sleep. The spot we had fixed on for our night's rest was free from all danger, but, unaccustomed to such scenes, the mind cannot easily tranquillize itself, and I slept no more during the night.

Les Grands Mulets are composed principally of granite, but I found also some asbestos, pyrites, gneiss, and amphibole intermixed with quartz. Most of this range of mountains immediately connected with Mont Blanc, have for their base and principal structure, a very fine granite; but the ravines, which descend from the summit to the base, and which serve as reservoirs or moulds wherein the lesser glaciers form, and descend to the greater, are loaded with decomposed slaty matter. There are also, at the foot of the Aiguille du Midi, copper and lead mines, but they are not wrought.

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Having thus far given you a hasty and imperfect sketch of the most remarkable objects which presented themselves to us during the first day, and endeavoured to impress on your mind the awful and sublime scenery which we witnessed, I shall in my next give you an account of our future progress, and ultimate arrival on the summit of Mont Blanc.

I am, dear friend,

Yours affectionately,

M. S.

A CANADIAN CAMPAIGN, BY A BRITISH OFFICER.—NO. I.

THIS narrative is intended rather as a private memoir than a relation of the incidents of the war, and professes simply to detail the operations of the right division of the British army in Upper Canada, to which I was myself attached, together with its capture and imprisonment, (in October 1813,) without following in progression the movements of the various other corps. I have not gone, therefore, into a diffuse statement of every date and circumstance, which would necessarily encroach too much on the plan I have laid down, as calculated to afford a source of interest to the general reader, rather than a fund from whence minute information for a diffusive work may be obtained.

Much has been said and written in respect to the American Indians; but I do not recollect having ever met with a detail sufficiently accurate to convey a just idea of the character of these people. As they will occupy a tolerable portion of my attention, and frequently appear under circumstances which might incline the reader to incredulity, I will merely observe, that no one incident will be found committed to these pages, which may not be attested by every officer who served with the right division of the Canadian army. In fact, to that division alone were the more savage of the Indian race attached; and when it is considered, that among the warriors of at least twenty different tribes, there were those who had scarcely ever any previous intercourse with whites, and had seldom approached a fortified place but in open hostility, the savageness of their natures will cease to excite surprise. As it is my intention to give a faithful account of the various cruelties committed during our struggle in Canada—cruelties we had not power to prevent, since perpetrated by an ally over whom we had no control—it may not be improper to advert to the motives for their employment. The Americans have invariably been loud in their condemnation of a measure which alone secured to us the possession of Upper Canada: with how little reason, however, will appear from the well-known fact, that every possible exertion was used, by the agents of their Government, to detach the Indians from our cause. Embracing the system adopted and followed by England for years, presents of all descriptions were issued to the warriors; while, in the council, the most flattering promises were made, the most seducing offers held forth, to induce them to make common cause with the invader. The wary chieftains, however, were not to be tempted by professions of friendship from those whose perfidy had long been proverbial with the Indian race. The bounties of England had been heaped on them with no sparing hand—the faith of the Government had never been violated—no spirit of interest or dominion had chased them from the homes of their forefathers—the calumet of peace had never once been dashed from the lips of those they were called on to abandon; and they remained true to the faith they had pledged, staunch to the cause in which they had embarked. The natives must have been our friends or our foes: had we not employed them the Americans would; and although humanity may deplore the necessity imposed by the very invader himself, of counting them among our allies, and combating at their side,—the law of self-preservation was our guide, and scrupulous indeed must be the power that would have hesitated at such a moment in its

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choice. The act of aggression was not ours—we declared no war against America—we levied no armies to invade her soil, and carry desolation wherever they came:—but we availed ourselves of that right, common to every weak power—the right of repelling acts of aggression by every means within our reach. Yet though it is admitted that the Indians, while our allies, were in some instances guilty of those atrocities peculiar to every savage people; let it not be supposed, as has been falsely and maliciously stated in a work from the pen of an "Englishwoman," that these atrocities were sanctioned either by the Government or by individuals. On the contrary, every possible mean was tried by the officer commanding at Amherstburg, and Colonel Elliott, superintendent of Indian affairs for that post, to soften down the warlike habits of the natives. The most likely method of preventing the unnecessary effusion of blood was that of offering rewards for prisoners. This, however, except in a very few instances, was found to be ineffectual; for the character and disposition of the savage were not to be tamed by rewards, nor the impression of ages to be removed by such temptations. To have employed force, would have been to have turned their weapons against ourselves; and a body of eight hundred troops, composing the utmost strength of the garrison, could have effected little against three thousand fiery warriors, unused to restraint, and acknowledging no power but their own lawless and unbridled will. The Americans themselves had Indians employed in their service—a few only it is true—but if they had not more, it was not owing to any want of exertion on their parts; and if it is admitted on one hand, that they conducted themselves with more humanity, it cannot at the same time be denied on the other, that the feebleness of their numbers rendered them more immediately subject to the authority of the American commanders, neither can it be disputed, that compulsion alone bound them to the adverse cause, their families having been often detained as hostages to answer for their fidelity.

The garrison of Amherstburg, at the commencement of the war, consisted merely of a part of the first battalion of the 41st regiment, and a single company of artillery. Situated at the head of Lake Erie, and forming the key to our relations with the Western Indians, with whom an extensive and lucrative trade in furs had long been established by the North-West Company, this post became an object of additional interest to the enemy. With every opportunity of ascertaining the weakness of its defences, and the almost utter impossibility of its obtaining supplies, the fall of Amherstburg was looked forward to by the Americans, as an event which admitted not of doubt. With this view, the division under General Hull, consisting of three thousand men, had been urged forward with all possible despatch to Detroit, a fort established on the river of the same name, and at a distance of eighteen miles beyond Amherstburg, an attack on which latter place was immediately contemplated. Having collected his boats, and made every other necessary preparation, the American general effected his landing three miles above Sandwich, a small town nearly opposite to Detroit, and within view of a corps of observation, which, in conformity with its instructions, retired on his approach. Colonel (now Major-General) St. George, Inspecting-Field-officer, and then commanding at Amherstburg, with that spirit and activity by which he was distinguished throughout the war, made every judicious disposition for his reception. The militia were called out, and, through the exertions of the various agents of their department, a body of one thousand Indians was soon collected. At a distance of eight miles from Amherstburg, and traversing the high road, is the Duck River, which empties itself into that of the Detroit, and is impassable even by cavalry. Over this, and near its mouth, a bridge composed entirely of timber, had been constructed. Seizing at once the advantage of this position, and determining to profit by the delay the enemy must consequently experience, Colonel St. George instantly caused the bridge to be destroyed, and a body of marksmen to be posted among the long grass and weeds with which the banks of the river are covered, for the purpose of annoying such of the enemy as appeared for its reconstruction. The Queen Charlotte, a vessel of twenty guns, was at

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But somehow I thought the Haymarket
Was better for hearing by half,
To people who live near the Park it
Affords the best home for a laugh.
" There Liston," I mutter'd, " has taught 'em
Mirth's balm in their bitters to mix:
I'll write such a part in the autumn
For him—in the Year Twenty-six!"

I meant to complete my Italian—
('Tis done in a twelvemonth with ease,)
Nor longer, as mute as Pygmalion,
Hang over the ivory keys.
I meant to learn music, much faster
Than fellows at Eton learn tricks:
Vercellini might teach me to master
The notes, in the Year Twenty-six.

'Tis past, with its corn and its cotton,
Its shareholders broken and bit:
And where is my pamphlet? forgotten.
And where is my treatise? unwrit.
My essay, my play, and my novel,
Like so many Tumble-down Dicks,
All, all in inanity grovel—
Alas! for the Year Twenty-six!

My Haymarket farce is a bubble,
My *Bocca Romana* moves stiff,
I 've spared Vercellini all trouble,
I don't even know the base cliff.
My brain has (supine anti-breeder)
Neglected to hatch into chicks
Her offspring—Pray how, gentle reader,
Thrive yours for the Year Twenty-six?

George Whitfield, whom nobody mentions
Now Irving has got into fame,
Has paved with abortive intentions
A place too caloric to name.
I fear, if his masonry's real,
That mine have Macadamized Styx:
So empty, cloud-capp'd, and ideal,
My plans for the Year Twenty-six!

Past Year! if, to quash all evasions,
Thou'ldst have me with granite repair,
On good terra firma foundations,
My castles now nodding in air:
Bid Time from my brow steal his traces
(As Bardolph abstracted the Pix),
Run back on his road a few paces,
And make me—like thee—Twenty-six.

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A VISIT TO THE SUMMIT OF MONT BLANC, BY CAPTAIN MARKHAM SHERWILL,

25th, 26th, and 27th of August, 1825.

In Letters addressed to a Friend, by Captain Markham Sherwill.

LETTER II.

Friday, 26th August, 1825.

"....Je jurai de consacrer la trace
De ce trop rapide moment,
Et de graver ici ton nom....."

Dear Friend.—About four o'clock in the morning my companions began to awake, and were soon on the alert. In some degree I envied them the comfortable sleep they had experienced: such a pleasure was denied to me by the constant nausea, which had not left me during the night. The thermometer marked two degrees of Reaumur below zero; and how much lower it had been I could not ascertain, not having one of Cavallo's horizontal thermometers, which indicate in the morning the extreme cold during the night. It is, however, a general opinion, that at the break of day, and just before the sun rises, the cold is at the greatest, and I do not think the thermometer had been much lower.

A good fire was soon blazing in one corner of our dormitory; snow was melted, some negus made, and two or three cold fowls soon disappeared: I was thirsty, but my appetite was gone.

As soon as breakfast was finished, we made preparations for our second day's march; and having determined, if we possibly could, to sleep at the same place the second night, we left great part of our baggage, taking with us provisions for a mid-day meal, and two or three bottles of wine: our shoes and stockings were hung up to dry in the sun, there being no fear, as Coutet observed, that they would be stolen by any passers-by. Towards five o'clock we were all in readiness, the ropes were again affixed to us, as yesterday, and we started forth, linked together like criminals to be tried for life or death. Coutet gave us a paper of figs and raisins, which he said would be very acceptable to munch occasionally with a handful of snow. On descending from Les Grands Mulets, we passed by the ruins of the small hut which Monsieur de Saussure had erected during his visit to Mont Blanc in 1787. It was a good deal encumbered with snow, and the walls did not appear more than two or three feet high. I preferred the spot we had chosen for our night's lodging, as the views were more extensive.

After a cursory view of the remains of the hut, which the indefatigable Saussure had once occupied, we almost immediately found ourselves on the Glacier de Tacconai. Our guides felt very sanguine as to the weather. The sky was clear, and the morning cold, although the sun had already influenced our thermometer before we left the Grands Mulets; for between four and five o'clock it had risen one degree, and was thus only one degree below zero, when we commenced our second day's journey.

The Glacier de Tacconai is not so difficult to traverse, as the one we had encountered yesterday, but I should say it was more replete with beauties of its own peculiar kind. It would be endless to detail to you our progress over the crevices, our descent into them, and the difficulties of overcoming the irregularities on the ice. These glaciers, as well as others among the Alps, are supposed to be in many places five hundred or six hundred English feet thick. Where the inclination of the rock on which they are formed makes an angle of thirty or forty degrees, their descent must be supposed to be somewhat rapid towards the valleys, although their movement is of course imperceptible to the eye. Passing, as they do, over a very rugged

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foundation, parts of them are impeded, while other parts are proceeding; and hence arise the crevices, or cracks, some of which I have seen not wider than half an inch, apparently just made, while others were much too large for us to pass over. Once we made a bridge, by laying four or five of our poles in a horizontal position, close together, where the chasm was not very wide, but of unknown depth. The ice of the glaciers has a different appearance from that which we see on ponds or lakes: in no case could skaits be used: the ice is porous, and scarcely ever can you find a piece exempt from innumerable air-bubbles, except in the icicles, the formation of which is evidently different. We were obliged frequently to cut ladders or steps in the rapid ascents or walls of ice; and I think it was seldom so hard as the common ice in our valleys, the globules of air naturally rendering it less compact. The ice in these lofty regions is plainly formed in a different manner from all other ice. There is a constant, though gentle thaw, in the day, and this humidity freezes every night; thus an ice is produced, which might be said to be composed of an endless succession of strata, the mid-day thaw not being sufficient to dissolve all the snow; the air consequently is not entirely driven out; hence the innumerable interstices. It is well known, and easily understood, that whenever it rains in the valleys, it snows on these high mountains; so that, in fact, it never rains on the summit of the Alps.

These glaciers are constantly fed, not only by the snows, but by a thousand smaller glaciers, which descend from the peaks through the ravines, to aid the growth of the greater. On many sides of these perpendicular aiguilles, the snow finds no place to lodge, as is very evident on that face of Mont Blanc next to the Allée Blanche; consequently in long and heavy snow-storms, the accumulation on the glaciers, which become the reservoirs, is double what it would be if the surrounding country was a plain.*

We continued our journey across the Glacier de Tacconai, in a direction leading towards the Dôme de Gôuté. In about two hours we encountered fresh difficulties, such as we had not experienced before, from the fresh-fallen snows, not more than three or four days old; the surface was frozen of the thickness of a shilling, but not sufficiently to bear our weight; consequently the fatigue of walking became very great, as we had now lost all solid footing. This fresh snow retarded our progress very much, for the guides were obliged constantly to advance a considerable distance before us, in order to ascertain the most practicable path; the crevices being partly obscured, the danger of passing them was very much increased. We frequently halted some minutes for their return, and, if their report was unfavourable, we changed our direction and pursued another. The anxiety and perseverance of the guides were beyond all praise, and could only be equalled by a degree of calmness and prudence rarely met with in such hardy fellows.

It was towards nine o'clock that we began to feel a strong tendency to sleep: the sensation cannot be described, for it is momentary. While we were in movement, it was less perceptible; but as soon as we remained stationary, an instantaneous desire to sleep overcame us, and frequently we were obliged to sit down on the snow, and beg of the guides a few minutes'

* In traversing these stagnated oceans, very large blocks of granite of many tons weight may be seen riding on the surface of the ice. These blocks have afforded the means of ascertaining a fact of importance. The experiment I am about to relate to you was made last year by some of the guides of Chamouni at the Mer de Glace. Two poles were erected one on each side of the glacier, out of reach of its movement, and so placed as to be in a direct line with the block of granite. In the course of twelve months this block had entirely changed its position as respecting the two poles, and had advanced upwards of one hundred yards on its march towards the valley; a clear proof that the glaciers do move on, and are continually diminishing at their lower extremity by the melting of the ice, and encreasing at the upper end by the constant snows.

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repose. Our thirst also became very annoying, and with difficulty could we utter two or three words without moistening our throats with snow, for we had now no more chance of finding water in the refreshing pools and bright streams, which had given us so much pleasure during our walk of yesterday.

Having now reached a very highly rarified air, respiration became troublesome and difficult, so that at every fifteen or eighteen paces we were obliged to halt, and turn ourselves round towards that point from whence the light winds came, in order to breathe more freely; but as soon as we halted to breathe, sleep attacked us on the other hand; so that we had, during the whole of this day, a variety of enemies, contending each in his own way to prevent our arrival at the summit of the mountain.

My indefatigable friend, Dr. Clark, was constantly in advance, and it was necessary to summon all my force and all my courage to keep near him;—often I found myself following, I knew not how; I had now acquired so mechanical a mode of walking, and putting my legs into the footsteps of the leading men—the snow being at this time nearly up to our knees—that I became almost insensible of fatigue. From nine o'clock to ten we were employed in ascending what is termed "Les Montées," a wall of snow, before arriving at "Le petit Plateau." Having accomplished this with considerable difficulty, we traversed Le petit Plateau, and arrived at the foot of a second and much steeper ascent, which conducts to the "Grand Plateau." Sleep, a burning sun on our head, cold feet, shortness of breath, and nausea, which I still felt in a great degree, rendered this ascent the most fatiguing I had ever hitherto attempted. Endeavouring, as I am, to give you a simple and true account of our proceedings, it is not necessary to call in the language of exaggeration. When therefore I tell you that this ascent was pretty steep, you may easily conceive it was so, from the simple circumstance, that frequently, in accomplishing the task, I was obliged to hold by the leg of the guide before me, to assist me in climbing through the snows, and that leg was perhaps at the moment even with the top of my head. The guide could not bend himself sufficiently to give me his hand, but, by sticking his pole firmly in the snow, he held fast by that, until I could bring myself to the spot where he stood. On arriving at the summit of this difficult ascent, we all with one accord spread the two or three knapsacks which we had brought, and sat down on them to eat our breakfast. It was now eleven o'clock, and we had hoped to have been by this hour much nearer the top of Mont Blanc; but the fresh-fallen snows had very much impeded our progress, and even the hardy guides began to complain somewhat of fatigue. We now looked back at the small plain, which we had just crossed, and I was told its breadth was about half a league. The Grand Plateau was to be our next undertaking, which, however, is a league and half across, almost quite level, entirely surrounded by lofty mountains, covered with eternal snows, its surface a good deal interrupted by large blocks of ice, and the ruins of avalanches, which continually fall on it from the inaccessible heights around. It is scarcely possible to call to your mind any figure which would give a just idea of the appearance of the Grand Plateau and its environs, unless I were to say it resembled what the inside of a white wash-hand basin might perhaps appear to an ant. We had entirely lost our appetite, and even the guides did not eat like the hardy race of the Alps; we drank some wine with snow, ate a small part of a fowl, and remained to rest in this place half an hour, with every hope and expectation of being on the summit in three or four hours.

I asked Coutet, who was my guide and counsellor, if I might lie down, and sleep on the snow for a few minutes: he gave his consent rather reluctantly, but, spreading my great-coat, and giving me his knapsack for a pillow, I fell back, and was immediately in a profound sleep. In ten minutes he awoke me, or I might have slept for ever.

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We sat on the brink of les Montées, which had cost us so much labour to ascend—for nearly half the way we had cut steps in the snow and ice—we could not distinguish one cheerful object, being entirely shut in by projecting hills of snow. We had lost all sight of the peaceful and happy vale of Chamouni, of which we were but yesterday the inmates. Nothing, in short, was visible, but endless tracts of snow around, and a burning sun above. Not a trace of any living creature was to be found; all was silent; not a sound to disturb the solitude! I would willingly have enjoyed this extraordinary scenery still longer, but the word was given to proceed. Our unavoidable delays had very much deranged our plans; and the fear of being late, and in the dusk of the evening, amidst the horrors and dangerous passes of the Glacier de Tacconai on our return, occasioned us to hurry on; for had we met with the slightest accident, we must have slept on the snows the whole night. We had lost all crevices, caverns, and dangers of this sort, but the fatigue was not diminished. Frequently we were obliged to change our leading guides; for the simple fact of their walking first through the snow, occasioned exhaustion. To walk long without stopping was totally impracticable; respiration became very short and quick. The reverberation of the sun's rays incommoded us, and the heat was considerable. It appeared to me strange, that if the globe of quicksilver was turned to the sun, it seemed to have no effect on it, whereas a person sitting still in the same place, or even walking on, would rejoice to put himself under the shelter of an umbrella—so scorching were the sun's rays on the body. When we had reached the extremity of the Grand Plateau, Coutet pointed out to us the spot where he and his brother guides were ingulphed in an avalanche, which fell from the very precipice we were now about to climb. We stopped for a few minutes, but were soon hurried on, lest a similar catastrophe should overtake us. The surface of the Plateau indicated that a fall had taken place not longer ago than six or eight days. The irregularities, and mountains of snow which were driven together, showed very plainly that the fall had been very considerable; for we reckoned its extent to be nearly or quite two miles long. Silence and expedition were imposed on us by our guides: the one was certainly more practicable than the other. To talk we had little inducement; and to hurry on, overcome as we were with fatigue, was next to impossible.

We now took rather an oblique direction, winding round a very steep ascent at the foot of the Rochers Rouges. We found this part very steep; and by a zigzag movement we left this bare granite rock on our left hand, and arrived at a small plain which conducts to the Petits Mulets, which are two or three uncovered peaks also of granite. We did not reach Les Petits Mulets until half past one o'clock. We sat down ten minutes to recruit our strength, and drink a glass of wine to all our friends below; the guides threw off their knapsacks, and shaking each other cordially by the hand, seemed to forget all their fatigues.

I must acknowledge to you that I looked at the magnificent summit of Mont Blanc, from this point, almost without consciousness. The strength and force which we possess, when quietly walking through the beautiful valleys of Switzerland or Savoy, are well nigh exhausted when we arrive at the top of their stupendous mountains. The mind becomes worn down by fatigue, as well as by the changes the body must necessarily undergo in passing through these different atmospheres; and its powers are enervated almost to annihilation. However, though weary and feeble enough, we had no thought of abandoning our object. Dr. Clark and two guides led the way; Coutet and Pierre Simon assisted me:—their aid is here very essential, for this last ascent is icy, with scarcely any snow to prevent your slipping; and at the same time so steep, that the surface appears sometimes nearly close to your face.

The wind, as we continued to ascend, was bitterly cold. We had tied

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some extra handkerchiefs over our ears and chin, and Coutet buttoned up closely his Alpine jacket, saying to me two or three times, by way of consolation, "Nous y serons tout à l'heure." My other guide, Simon, had never been up; and though his strength and spirits had not failed him, he complained, and suffered a good deal from pain in his eyes. Within a short distance from Les Petits Mulets, I forgot to mention to you, that we saw very near to us, two birds which the guides called "Corneilles." They were, I think, what Buffon calls "Le choquard des Alpes," and Linnæus "Corvus Pyrrhocorax." They inhabit the highest Alps, even amidst the eternal snows, and scarcely are seen on the mountains of the Jura. They feed on berries and wild fruits, and such insects as are found near the edge of the snow.

At two or three minutes after three o'clock we arrived at the utmost summit, the object of all our toils, and Coutet called out, "Nous voici au sommet du Mont Blanc!" I stood motionless for some time to take a general view of this strange wild world of mountains, and could scarcely believe where I was! We proceeded on towards the centre, and immediately fixed three poles in a triangular form, and suspended the barometer and thermometer to them. My watch was five minutes past three o'clock. At about five minutes after three o'clock in the afternoon of the 26th August, 1825, the barometer marked fifteen inches nine lines and one-tenth French: and when we left Coutet's house the day before, it stood at twenty-five inches one line and one-tenth. The thermometer was three-fourths of a degree below zero, Reaumur. Having made notes of these observations, Coutet pointed out the principal objects worthy of notice, and most clearly to be seen from this the highest point in our quarter of the globe. It being three o'clock, or a little later, the sun was in the south-west, and interrupted our view very much in the direction of Geneva and the Jura: the Jura mountains formed our horizon in that direction. Langres, the highest town in France, we could not discover, although it has been said, that the chain of the Alps has been seen from it. On the opposite side of Mont Blanc the Apennines were visible for a vast extent, and the situations of Milan and Turin were pointed out to us. We looked very carefully and with an earnest wish to discover any thing like the Mediterranean sea in the line over Genoa, but I cannot say that I saw it. On the side of Switzerland the "Jungfrau," near Grindelwald, was very conspicuous, as well as the Mont Buet, the Diablerets, the Ghemmi, and St. Gothard; more to the eastward, Monte Rosa was visible, which is 2430 toises above the level of the sea. The Valley of Chamouni, and even its little village, can be seen with a telescope. The convent of the Grand St. Bernard was hid, owing to its situation among the mountains. We could not see much of the Allée Blanche, or the environs of Mont Blanc, immediately at its base on that side, owing to the various projections, which, as it were, grow from its sides.

The day was remarkably fine—there was not a cloud above our heads; but on many of the lesser chains of mountains, and on the Apennines, there were light clouds and vapour.

Coutet endeavoured to make me see a star; but either he was mistaken, or his eyes were better than mine. I walked to the extreme end of the summit, and looked over towards the Maritime Alps: this chain was very distinct. The length of the summit of Mont Blanc is two hundred paces, and nearly level. I found a difficulty in measuring the width, for the sides are an immediate descent, so that I did not know where to begin or where to finish. The whole figure may be understood by the common term, a hog's-back shape.—I am told that the summit of this mountain has been described as forming nearly a triangle; but we did not find this to be the case now. It is evident, from the drifts of snow during the turbulent winds in winter, that its appearance may change in twenty-four hours; and that which is of a triangular form to-day may be circular to-morrow. The variety and changes in the drifts of snow on exposed plains, are sufficiently well known to every traveller.

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Every object seen from this summit (2460 toises above the level of the sea) becomes so diminutive, with the exception of a few principal mountains, and so fore-shortened, that it seems entirely to have changed its form and character. The beautiful Aiguille du Midi, and those of Charmoz, the delight and admiration of every stranger who visits Chamouni, are in some degree lost in the general confusion; I ought to say, in truth, that no one particular object could be seen distinctly: every thing appears so massed together, that all power of distinction is lost.

While stationary on the summit of Mont Blanc, I experienced a very peculiar sensation of lightness of body, which was also felt by some of the party, to whom I mentioned the circumstance. It appeared as if I could have passed the blade of a knife under the sole of my shoes, or between them and the ice on which I stood. I mentioned this fact to Dr. Ebel at Zurick, and also to other persons whom I thought capable of elucidating the cause; but their explanations were not satisfactory. The subject will, perhaps, serve to amuse your studious hours: I only vouch for the fact. The rarity of the air did not affect me quite so much on the summit, as when labouring through the deep snows and climbing the ascents on our passage, during the ten hours we were employed in ascending from Les Grands Mulets.

The sense of hearing was not interrupted, if there had been any thing to hear; the smell, and power of feeling, were not diminished; but the faculties of the mind were in less activity. The sky was of a very dark indigo blue; this deep tint was, indeed, among the most remarkable features we observed. Being, as we were, above all vapour and thick atmosphere, which rises to a certain height above the level of the earth, the medium through which we saw it was of course more pure; and we looked, as it were, into a dark ocean of infinite space. After having well observed, as far as could be distinguished, the principal objects within reach, and again examined our glasses, the barometer was found to remain steady: the thermometer, however, had somewhat changed, and the mercury had fallen a very little below the point at which it was first marked, viz. three-fourths of a degree below zero of Reaumur. The wind began to freshen from the south-west, and Coutet would not suffer us to remain.

The snow drifted from the neighbouring mountains, and was hurrying along the surface of the summit about half way up to our knees, but none of it remained on the ice where we stood. This drifting snow, meeting with resistance, such as the body or legs of a man, would soon accumulate, not greatly to his comfort.

I have mentioned to you before that we had been ten hours coming from the Grands Mulets to the spot where we now stood. Although our return would not occupy more than half that time, still it was already late, and we might, therefore, by some accidental delay, have to cross the dangerous Glacier de Tacconai in the dark, or else sleep unsheltered on the ice. The injunctions of the guides were positive, and we were obliged reluctantly to obey their summons. We took one more general view, to endeavour to fix on our minds the wonderful panorama spread before us. How I wished you could have been transported, without experiencing the dangers and difficulties we had encountered, to the same spot, and enjoyed with me the magnificence of this wondrous scene. "Partager les plaisirs, n'est-ce pas les doubler?" Yes, my dear friend, I did indeed wish for you, that you might experience for a short time the awful impression of this sublime scenery. You may imagine that any other solitude is very similar to this, or that the silence of the lonely glen, or dark forest, may well represent the stillness here. But, no! the dreary wildness of the whole imposes on the mind a totally different feeling to that which we experience where there are objects of less horror to relieve the train of thought. There is a grandeur, a savageness, an awfulness in these regions, which seem to hurry the soul of man into a state of distraction, and to render the prospect widely unlike those

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scenes of quietude, which soothe and soften the mind, and bid it reflect with composure. Here we were above all living beings, the sole inhabitants of a region far above the lofty flight of the eagle, where the foot of the chamois never ventures, and where man has seldom been. We stood amidst the frowns of savage Nature, almost insensible to every object beneath, and silently contemplating the cloudless heavens, pure and bright as the unsullied wastes of snow around and beneath. Here all worldly passions cease; man's thoughts occupy themselves in a more worthy train of reflection: he forgets the injustice of his enemies: his soul raises itself to heaven, as its nearest point, and rejoices to feel itself nearer the abode of truth. "Le vrai nous vient du ciel, l'erreur vient de la terre." When we meet, we will enlarge upon this subject; in the mean time I will briefly state our mode of descent, an operation very different from that pursued in ascending.

On reaching the edge of the declivity which led to the Petits Mulets, Coutet told me that it would not be safe to walk down; and on inquiry I found the usual practice was to seat yourself on the ice between two guides, and thus slide in a few minutes the distance which had cost us an hour and half to ascend. I submitted to the plan suggested to me; and though the operation is somewhat hazardous, the agility of the guides in regulating the velocity by means of their poles, seems to remove all danger. In descending this first slope by this new method, I cast my eyes once or twice over the precipice to our right hand, and had just one moment to think, that if, by an ill-fated turn, we had directed our course that way, it appeared that we should most unexpectedly have paid a visit to the good monks of St. Bernard. When at Les Petits Mulets, I begged Coutet to stop a few minutes that I might once more look up at the hoary summit of Mont Blanc; and having rested a short time, and gathered a few fragments of granite from this, the highest bare point, we continued our line of march.

The Grand Plateau, whose lengthened plain extends nearly a league and a half, is not very comforting to a traveller ready to sink under an accumulation of fatigue and exhaustion. We had scarcely eaten any food during the day: a few of Coutet's figs and raisins had satisfied me; and among the seven guides, only half a three-pound loaf had been devoured, and two small chicken, which certainly, on any of their accustomed expeditions, would scarcely have sufficed for one; and our consumption of wine did not this day amount to three bottles. Having crossed the Grand Plateau, which required an hour and a half, owing to the deep snow, we stood for a few minutes debating what means would be the most secure to descend what I endeavoured to describe to you before as the great Montées. To slide seemed impracticable. This slope had been warmed by the sun in the mid-day, when we passed it; but now, owing to the shade and cold winds, it had again frozen, and was become exceedingly dangerous. Something was to be done; for to remain there all night, destitute of food, firing, and clothes, was not very desirable. We, therefore, began to walk with a very careful and deliberate step, placing our feet in the track we had made in the morning. We slowly crawled downward for some time, using every precaution not to slip; for though we were attached to each other by ropes, still the fall of one might endanger others: and to the base of the Montées was about twice as high as the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. I had not descended more than one hundred, or one hundred and fifty feet, before I fell, and instantly the snow began to roll with me, nor could I stop myself until the ropes were extended to their full length. Coutet cried out—"Ne bougez pas, Monsieur, ne faites pas le moindre mouvement." It required some little self-command to obey his orders; but I remained perfectly quiet, though not very composed, until he gave me directions to endeavour to press my heels into the snow, and thus raise myself a little, while the two guides, who held the ropes, should by degrees pull me up to the path from whence I had fallen. In trying to press my feet forcibly into the snow, they

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came in contact with the ice, and slipped, so that my efforts were quite useless. However, by the utmost exertion in my power, and by the force of the guides, I was pulled up, but required some little time to recover my senses; for, swinging almost in the air, immediately over so great a depth, with some doubt of the result of the manœuvre, I was for the moment a little nervous. Two or three other trifling slips brought us to the small Plateau, over which we walked as rapidly as fatigue would allow us. When at its extremity, we had the smaller Montées to descend; but, as this was much less steep, and only about half the height of the other, we all sat down, and were very soon comfortably landed at its base.—I never enjoyed the pleasure of descending the Montagnes Russes, which were formerly fashionable near Paris; but I apprehend our slides were very similar to them.—We now witnessed two or three grand avalanches; but, happily for us, they took an oblique direction, and we remained stationary to observe their fall. The avalanches which fall directly from the mountain tops, thunder down with a deafening roar; but those which merely slip down the snowy steeps, cause little noise, but raise a cloud of white dust, which marks their progress, and produces a beautiful effect. When we reached the edge of the Glacier de Tacconai, about six o'clock, it was getting dusk; and we had to cross a deep and frightful chasm in order to save a very considerable circuit. This passage was only practicable by laying four or five of our poles in a horizontal position, and thus making a bridge, having ropes affixed to each person. To descend the crevice was out of the question, for it was very deep, and contained water, and ice apparently not sufficiently frozen to support our weight. The poles were laid, but not in a very secure manner, and the leading guides, throwing their knapsacks over before them in order to be as light as they could, passed over in safety, and we followed. The poles, however, were very slippery, as well as the soles of our shoes. Many times in the course of our haltings, I found that I could not make the least impression on the upper leather with my iron spike, the shoe being frozen as hard as a sabot. To traverse this fragile bridge requires a pretty steady step, for one fall would be one too many.

Having successfully passed this chasm, we had not far to arrive at Les Grands Mulets, and reached our resting-place in perfect safety soon after seven o'clock, having been little more than four hours in descending from the summit; whereas it cost us ten hours to ascend to it. The rapid slides which we accomplished without any overturn or accident, facilitated very considerably our arrival. We soon spread our blanket on the rock, and in a very few minutes we were in a sound sleep, leaving the guides busy in preparing their supper, lighting their fire, and making negus. Our wood being all expended, the old useless ladder was soon cut up, and did good service even in its last moments.

As I shall have a few more particulars to relate to you relative to our arrival at Chamouni, I shall close this letter, and threaten you with a third. I dare say your patience is exhausted, but you imposed on yourself the fatigue, by a desire for every particular. For the present, however, I take compassion on you, and only add that I am ever,

Yours affectionately,

M. S.

RETORT LEGAL.

"What with briefs and attending the court, self and clerk,
I'm at my wits' end," muttered Drone the Attorney.
"I fear 'tis a medical case," answered Shark—
"You 're so terribly tired by so little a journey."

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DICTIONARY OF LOVE AND BEAUTY.

NO. V.

AGE.—*Ninon de l'Enclos.—Lovers past their prime.*

LORD BYRON, in a pleasant passage of his "Don Juan," says, that he never, by any process, could prevail upon a lady to tell him her age. We have been luckier than the noble poet, perhaps because our fair informants have had better faith in our good opinion. Men are supposed to be more ready to tell their ages than women; yet we suspect, that wherever a gentleman has piqued himself on his good looks, he is apt to let the truth out as unwillingly as any of the other sex; though he may think it belongs to his manly courage to do so. It is not handsome to watch people's faces for a disclosure; otherwise the experiment might easily be made.

Like all other concealments and insincerities, it is a foolish thing to palter about one's age: and like all other truths and open-dealings, it is a wise and triumphant thing to be candid about it. There is no case more in point respecting the advantage of truth-telling in ordinary, than this very one. The matter is clear and logical. If the lady is younger than we suspected, she has all the advantages, whatever they may be, which ladies propose to themselves in looking older than they ought. If she is older, our surprise at her young looks, and admiration of her candour, are proportionate.

Upon the subject of age itself, as it concerns the passion of love, we have already touched in our article upon Abelard and Eloisa. But there is a great deal more to be said upon it, as all those will agree with us, who are of an age between—what shall we say?—and seventy. We were going to say, sixty; but a friend of ours, who retains the enthusiasm of youth at sixty-three, and cracks walnuts and a play of Euripides at night-time, has just informed us of his intention to take unto himself a fourth wife; and he is left far behind by a lady, who ought to have lived on, and loved better, for his sake; we mean the famous Ninon de l'Enclos, whom Steele calls "the grandmother of the loves."

Voltaire, in spite of a sum of money she bequeathed him to buy books, says, that Ninon was by no means so charming in her old age, but partook in a very unequivocal degree of the aspect and infirmities of that time of life. He laughs at the story of the passion of the Abbé Gedoyn. Voltaire, however, was then a boy; and besides the dislike of children for old faces to which they are unaccustomed, could not be expected to discern, in the countenance of Ninon, what might have remained to create it an interest. Nevertheless, we incline to believe with him. We dare say that Ninon, like Diana de Poitiers (of whose autumnal charms Brantome gives a most vernal account), retained the sort of beauty that she possessed, to a considerable period; for she led an easy, and to her a natural life, and doubtless took care of her health by those duties of temperance in eating and drinking, and personal cleanliness, which Nature never fails to reward. We doubt not her graces in those particulars; nor her good sense in most; nor even her goodheartedness, to a certain extent. It is an especial honour to her memory, that she never forsook an old friend. But we are confident,

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house, as might have been expected, very civilly told him that he had mistaken its character.

His lordship has often related this adventure in a very amusing manner, and I am surprised not to find it recorded in any of the "Conversations" with him, which have been published since his death.

When Lord Byron had fixed the time of his departure from Constantinople, he requested me, before it took place, to assist him in collecting information on the subject of the two revolutions which broke out in that capital during the years 1807 and 1808. I applied for this purpose to my Armenian friends, the brothers *Dooz-Ogloo*, who, as masters of the mint, jewellers of the seraglio, and confidential agents to a long succession of ministers at the Porte, were likely to possess the best information relative to the causes and particulars of those interesting events. It was, however, some days after Lord Byron had left Constantinople that I obtained the required notes, a copy of which I forwarded to him in Greece. But I have since had reason to believe that the letter which contained it never reached its destination; and as the subject is mentioned in none of the modern accounts of travels in Turkey which have since that time been published in this country, I shall proceed to give here a brief sketch of such occurrences during those revolutions as may appear most interesting.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LADY ——,

ON RECEIVING THE PRESENT OF A SILVER SNUFF-BOX INLAID WITH GOLD.

I HAVE styled it the Gift of the Fair,
As I gazed on its beauty the while;
But can silver or gold spread a snare
Like the witchcraft that dwells in her smile?

It was once with ecstatic delight
That I bask'd in the beam of her eye;
And though now far removed from my sight,
To my dream still her image is nigh.

Long, long may thy loveliness reign
O'er each heart as the cheerer of woe,
And thy bosom each rapture retain
Which Friendship and Love can bestow!

To the South shouldst thou deign to retire
Like the sun in the dead of the year,
And bid other nations admire
That beauty to Britain so dear—

When by thee our sad shores are forsook,
And thy bark dances light on the wave,
O throw back a languishing look
On the land of the free and the brave!

But, loved Fair, should my freedom offend,—
On this earth while far distant we live,
Be it mine to repent and amend,
And thine to forget and forgive.

H. P.

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A VISIT TO THE SUMMIT OF MONT BLANC.

In Letters addressed to a Friend, by Captain Markham Sherwill.

LETTER III.

August 27, 1825.

" By the inquisitive and half-suspicious looks
With which ye eye each other, ye do wish
To disbelieve all ye have heard, and yet
Ye dare not."

My dear Friend,—I have no doubt that you remember the following passage of our regretted bard Byron, in his " Childe Harold." No language of mine can equal the accuracy of his glowing lines :—

" What palaces of Nature! whose vast walls
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,
And throned Eternity in icy halls
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls
The Avalanche, the thunderbolt of Snow !
All that expands the spirits, yet appals,
Gathers around these summits, as to show
How earth may pierce to heaven, yet leave vain man below !"

I told you in my former letter that, on our arrival at Les Grands Mulets on the evening of the second day, we immediately threw ourselves on our blanket, and were soon asleep; but our watchful guides would not permit us long to enjoy this delight, fearing, as they said, that the cold winds might attack our limbs after so much exercise, and render them stiff, and, perhaps, for ever useless. We were, therefore, soon roused to partake of the supper which the guides had prepared. Some few slices of mutton were toasted before the fire, and these I now found very agreeable, as the quarter of an hour's rest and sleep had removed many of the unpleasant sensations I had felt all day in walking: my regular breathing was restored; the nausea had left me; and we began to recover ourselves, except our faces, which were very much swollen and inflamed. I found my wrists also very much enlarged and extremely painful: this was owing to the constant use of the pole in sustaining the body. There was a smile of complacency on the countenances of the guides as they sat in a circle round the blazing fire; nor could the merry Falstaff, had he been there, have more enjoyed his cup of sack than we did our saucepan of negus.

The sun's last beams were long gone from our " airy hall," but they still illumined Mont Blanc.

" It stood before us
A mount of snow fretted with golden pinnacles."

Our slender tent was again pitched, and every preparation made to inclose ourselves as well as we could for the night. Dr. Clark kindly ordered all the guides, if possible, to come within its covering; for after so fatiguing and long a walk, it would have been injudicious in them to have remained exposed to the cold air. They lay over and across each other in every direction: arms and legs seemed disputing for the most snug and comfortable corner; but we all soon fell asleep, and were only occasionally awakened by the continued thunder of the avalanches. The moon was at her full: we had no wind: the same awful silence reigned as during the first night, but our sleep was more profound. In the morning of Saturday, 27th August, 1825, we arose at five o'clock, but were in no great hurry to leave our abode, as seven or eight hours would be sufficient to take us back to Chamouni.

With a small part of the ladder which had been saved, a fire was soon made, and we breakfasted. After this we crept about some parts of Les Grands Mulets, in search of various specimens of lichens, minerals, &c. The guides were too happy to fill their now almost empty knapsacks with

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minerals and other specimens, which are sold in their respective cabinets "d'histoire naturelle" at Chamouni, of which Coutet's is the best, being very rich in all that relates to the highest Alps. These specimens are sold at a very moderate price, when we consider the personal danger and risk which these hardy men undergo. I was surprised to see with what apparent carelessness they would step from stone to stone, round this rock, utterly regardless of the enormous depth below.—The guides have occasionally seen some mice on this elevated rock. I was exceedingly anxious to secure a specimen, but our search was unavailing. A mouse from so unfrequented a spot would have been as interesting as the spiders of De Luc.

It was seven o'clock when we bade adieu, probably for ever, to the hospitality of Les Grands Mulets; and descending by a rugged passage, we immediately launched forth on the Glacier des Bossons. I will not inflict upon you a repetition of our slides, and tumbles on the ice. We did not, however, pursue the same track as heretofore, but kept nearer the base of the Aiguille du Midi, as the glacier was there less fissured and creviced than in our former route. We met with several blocks of ice riding on the surface of this glacier. Some of them must have been at least twenty feet high, and doubtless, like the masses of granite I have mentioned before, have been for years descending from the higher steeps of Mont Blanc. It is the falling of these pieces of rock, as well as the avalanches of snow, that cause the noises in the higher regions, which we heard continually by night and by day.

We now felt the wind more troublesome, and the guides said that it blew so hard on the summit of Mont Blanc, as to render it impossible to venture up to-day. We could perceive light clouds passing over it with great rapidity. Nothing could be more propitious than the weather we had experienced: no fogs, no winds, nor one unlucky change in the heavens, had thwarted our plans. About noon we found ourselves once again on terra firma. During four or five hours we had been on foot, wandering amidst the frozen sea of the Glacier de Bossons, and examining all its beauties at leisure. We quitted the Glacier, at least I speak for myself, with a mixed feeling of pleasure and regret. In approaching La Pierre de l'Echelle, we passed over the debris of a very considerable avalanche which had fallen across our former path, at the exact spot where our guides on Thursday had strictly enjoined us to pass silently and quickly. To avoid these heavy falls of ice, or indeed the avalanches on the higher mountains, would be almost impossible, owing to their rapidity, and the difficulty of running out of their line, where it is impossible even to walk quick.

When arrived at La Pierre de l'Echelle we ate our last morsel, and drank our last bottle of wine, each with his hat raised on the top of his pole waving in the air; and a hearty congratulation passed from lip to lip, that we had overcome all difficulties and dangers, and were safely returned from the monarch of the Alps.

We stayed here nearly an hour, and chatted over many of our hair-breadth escapes. The heat was exceedingly oppressive, now that we had left the cooler atmosphere of the glaciers.

> —— "This temple
> In undisturbed and lone serenity,
> Finding itself a solemn sanctuary
> In the profound of heaven,"

was indeed to us a resting-place of joy! We could, for the first time, hear indistinctly the rushing of the wild Arve in the valley: the shining spire of Chamouni church was glittering in the sun's mid-day rays, and something like a habitable world lay at our feet. As we turned round a point of the rock which led to the Pierre Pointue, I was very much struck by the appearance of a single goat browsing above our heads, which seemed to salute us with its plaintive cry: the fact is of no consequence in itself, but, unaccustomed as we were to any fresh sound, the incident to me was in-

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teresting. We soon passed the Pierre Pointue, and descended very rapidly towards the Chalet de la Part, where we hoped to have found our hostess, who had so kindly wished us a safe return when we parted from her on Thursday; but she was absent. Many a lovely flower was still on the mountain-side. I gathered a great number, which I have carefully preserved as relics.

The rhododendron was very abundant, and we brought down many sprigs of it in commemoration of our journey. The long descent we had still to accomplish we found very fatiguing. The quantities of loose stones which lay in the path made the footing unsafe, as the declivity was very rapid, and the sun intensely hot.

We continued on during another hour, and towards one o'clock suddenly espied, in the shade of a large fir, two or three persons apparently with a cloth spread before them on the grass, as if enjoying a cold repast. The elevation at which we still were above the valley seemed to preclude a visit from the strangers of Chamouni, and we conjectured some time in vain what the preparation could mean. On a nearer approach, our guides told us it was Maria de Mont Blanc come to welcome us. And who, said I, is Maria de Mont Blanc? Before he could reply, she advanced to meet us, and invited us to partake of her cheer. She had spread on the ground upon a clean white napkin, a can of milk, a large jug of cream, and some delicious brown bread. We seated ourselves on the green turf around this unexpected and welcome feast, and begged Maria to relate her history, of which the following is the only part which seems to connect itself with our excursion. Maria is known throughout the whole valley by the somewhat lofty title of Maria de Mont Blanc, and for the following reason. When she was twenty years of age, her youthful ardour, and love of mountain scenes, led her to join a party of guides who were going for their own amusement to explore the unfrequented, and then almost unknown, passage to the top of Mont Blanc. Maria set out in good heart with her companions, and bore her share of the fatigue with a prowess seldom equalled by a female. They continued their march until they had passed the plain of the Grand Plateau, when, in her ascent towards the Rocher Rouge, her strength failed her, and for some time she could advance no farther. Her spirits were still good. Her friends and companions had too much kind feeling to abandon her, and enjoy the selfish pleasure of accomplishing their task alone. They admired the fortitude which she had hitherto evinced, and determined, one and all, that Maria should be the first female who had ever visited the summit of Mont Blanc; and by incessant exertion they accomplished their purpose, and succeeded in placing her on the summit of Europe. She descended in safety, and has ever since borne the title of Maria de Mont Blanc. The fact of her ascent to the summit is not doubted by any of her neighbours; and is more satisfactorily stated than that of Monsieur Meyer, of Aarau, to the summit of the Jungfrau.* We listened attentively to her tale, and partook of her welcome repast, which she told us she had not spread on a similar occasion during the last three years. Mr. Clissold made his successful ascent with Coutet as his principal guide. It is to be understood, that Mr. Jackson has since ascended in 1823, but Maria de Mont Blanc did not happen to meet him.

* The Jungfrau acquired this name, because no one had ever surmounted its difficulties, or gained possession of its summit. Various are the reports respecting the ascent of Monsieur Meyer of Aarau: it has been affirmed, and as often contradicted. It is said that the guide who attended him, has, since the death of that gentleman, denied the fact of their having reached the top. Dr. Ebel, of Zurich, told me, that he was persuaded of the truth of Monsieur Meyer's statement. The undertaking is perhaps more difficult than the ascent of Mont Blanc, owing to the almost insurmountable walls of ice, which defy the approach of the best chamois hunter. They meet you after having passed the glacier, which is seen between the Shreckhorn and the Eiger. These two latter mountains, as well

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Having slept during two nights in an atmosphere below the freezing point, we felt the heat of the valley, as we approached it, most oppressive. My face was considerably swollen, and much inflamed, and I apprehended some violent attack of inflammation. We continued to descend about one hour more, walking at a gentle pace, under the shade of the noble firs which skirt the mountain, attended by one or two friends of the guides, who had advanced to meet them, and assisted in carrying their knapsacks.

Coutet, the chief guide, had very considerately sent two mules to the foot of the mountain, which we mounted with great satisfaction. We proceeded to Coutet's house at Les Pelerins, amidst the congratulations and smiles of the inmates of this hamlet, who had assembled to welcome us. The thermometer at Les Pelerins marked fourteen degrees of Reaumur. We halted a short time at Coutet's, and had now about half an hour more to the Union Inn, passing by several cottages, the windows of which were filled with ruddy smiling countenances.

We were joined by groups of young and old, who accompanied us to Chamouni, where we arrived between two and three o'clock, and soon sought the quiet of our own chambers. I cannot quit this part of my letter without expressing my gratitude to Captain Boyce, of the Royal Navy, who was, at the moment of my arrival, a stranger to me, but who acted the part of an old and kind friend. He bathed my head with cold water during some time, and performed many little kind offices for me, from which, oftentimes, pretended friendship will shrink. I mention this to you, that you may thank him again and again for me.

We appeared at dinner at the *table-d'hôte*, although our faces were not in very decent trim; and were busily occupied in answering the numerous inquiries of those who were interested in the "high-ways and by-ways" of Mont Blanc.

To the prudence, foresight, and knowledge of our guides we entirely owe our success in the expedition. They were persevering in difficulty, and prudent in danger. They were cheerful and obliging throughout the three days, and in every respect merit the good-will of the stranger who visits the valley of Chamouni.

To Dr. Clark I owe all the pleasurable part of my excursion. On our arrival at Chamouni he seemed to forget the care necessary for his own health, in his attentions to the wants of the guides, and to my necessities at the moment. We had both suffered from heat, cold, and fatigue: I could render him no service; but he kindly relieved me from every unpleasant result.

I beg to repeat the observation, I would not myself advise any friend to undertake a journey to the summit of Mont Blanc. It is in itself a dangerous effort. The risk of losing one's own life, or that of the guides, is too great to be incurred without a very important object. In case of loss of life on the part of any one or more of the guides, his or their wives and children would naturally look for a maintenance from him in whose service that life had been forfeited. On the other hand, I would strongly urge any one who is a good walker, to go to the Grands Mulets, sleep there one night under the canopy of Heaven, and return to Chamouni the second day. There is not a great deal more danger in this expedition, with experienced guides, than there is in traversing the Mèr de Glace to visit Le Jardin; but the beauties of Nature are infinitely greater during the journey to the Grands Mulets, and better repay the tourist, who is fond of this description of scenery, than any thing he can see in going to Le Jardin.

We had a long conversation with the father of our guide Coutet, who is eighty years of age, very stout and hearty. It does not appear that he was

as the Wetterhorn and the Mönck, have never been attempted by the most persevering guides or mountaineers of the Oberland. They are about twelve hundred toises high.

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of the party with Dr. Picard in 1786, who was the first person that ever reached the summit of Mont Blanc. But old Coutet ascended the same year with two of his companions, and afterwards with Monsieur de Saussure. The guides were only paid by him six francs *per diem*.

Napoleon ordered a cross to be erected on the top of Mont Blanc, I forget in which year, as well as one on the Monte Rosa, and on the Buet. Old Coutet had the superintendence of the one in his own neighbourhood; and although it was fixed with every care, and in a workmanlike manner, Coutet told me, that in four hours the cross was very much out of a perpendicular, and in a few days was entirely carried away by the winds. Such must be the fate of any thing exposed to the fury of the elements in such a situation, where contending winds very commonly meet, as indeed we saw in our passage up, and carry the snow into the air in the form of a column to a surprising height. If I might be permitted to add a few hints in the shape of advice to those who intend to visit Mont Blanc, with respect to dress, &c. I should say it is essential that a person should walk rather lightly clad about the body, that is, with one waistcoat and a coat or jacket, for the difficulty of proceeding with more would be very great. No one should undertake this journey without strong worsted stockings and shoes moderately thick, such as have been worn several times, and have acquired the form and shape of the foot. Two pair of each will be sufficient. The gaiters should be two pair, of coarse, warm materials, but not of leather, and well tied down and secured all round the foot to prevent the snow from getting in, which freezes into small lumps as large as peas, and becomes very painful to the instep. Cloth pantaloons are necessary, and a second pair is required; for on descending the slides, they are liable to be torn and get wet. Let all the above articles be changed, on arriving at the halting-place for the night. A great coat should be carried by one of the guides, so that it may be ready to throw over the shoulders during the unavoidable stoppages. A flannel waistcoat to put on at night is also recommended, but by no means to walk with on. A large nightcap to pull over the ears, and a neckcloth to cover the chin and mouth, when on the summit, or lying down to sleep, are essential:—a hat is a bad thing in every respect, a cap is better.

Avoid drinking brandy; it may warm the body for the moment and give a temporary activity, but an artificial stimulus of this nature is almost always followed by faintness and lassitude, which in the end has no remedy. If the feet become numbed, in case of being obliged to stand still a quarter of an hour, do not attempt to take off the shoes to rub them, but strike them forcibly against each other, however painful the operation may be. Use no greasy substance on your face during your ascent or descent, but apply the *Pommade de Concombre*, well rubbed into your face on going to bed the first night of your arrival in the valley: in the morning take a hot bath with eight or ten pounds of bran in it, and the act of shaving immediately in the bath-room will be a luxury. If, on descending, there should be a great disposition in the blood to rise to the face and head, apply towels of cold water as soon as possible, which will be of service. If these few and simple hints shall prove of any benefit to future adventurers over the snowy plains, my object will be fully answered, and I wish them all as pleasant a ramble, and as successful a return, as we had.

Table of the principal heights in the neighbourhood of Chamouni.

	French Toises, above the level of the Mediterranean.
Mont Blanc	2460
Géant (Aiguille du)	2174
Verte (Aiguille)	2094
Aiguille d'Argentière	2015
Midi (Aiguille du)	2009
Grand plateau du Mont Blanc	1995
Buet	1578

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Jardin (le)	1414
Cramont (le)	1401
Joli (Mont)	1368
La Pied de l'Aiguille du Midi	1368
Breven	1306
Prairion	1000
Montanvert	954
Flégère (Croix de)	954
Forclaz (sur Prairion)	765
Courmayeur	630
Chamouni, village	524
Gervais, village de St.	408

I subjoin a Copy of a Certificate, regularly sealed, signed, and witnessed, which was brought to each of us unasked by the Chief Guide and the Syndic at Chamouni.

Copy of the Certificate.

Nous Simon Coutet guide chèf presidant la compagnie des Guides établie à Chamouni, province de Faucigny, division de Savoie, Royaume de Sardaigne, certifions, et attestons à qui il appartiendra, avoir vu nous-mêmes dès notre Bureau siégeant au chèf lieu de Chamouni, au moyen de Lunettes de longue vue, le vingt six Aout courant à trois heures dix minutes de l'après midi, arriver à la première sommité du Mont Blanc, Messieurs le Docteur Edmund J. Clark de Londres, et le Capitaine Markham Sherwill de Fontainebleau, accompagnés de sept guides, dont le rétour très heureux a eu lieu le lendemain dans l'après midi, au désir de la multitude qui les a vus arriver. En foi de quoi Chamouni le 29 Aout, 1825.

Signed, Le Guide Chèf
SIMON COUTET.
Syndic
W. DARVIER.

RECORDS OF WOMAN.—NO. X.

*Pauline.**

——— One adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists, one only;—an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, howe'er
Sad or disturb'd, is order'd by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power,
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.

WORDSWORTH.

ALONG the star-lit Seine went music swelling,
Till the air thrill'd with its exulting mirth;
Proudly it floated, even as if no dwelling
For cares or stricken hearts were found on earth;
And a glad sound the measure lightly beat,
A happy chime of many-dancing feet.

For in a palace of the land that night
Lamps and fresh roses and green leaves were hung,
And from the painted walls a stream of light
On flying forms beneath soft splendor flung:
But loveliest far amidst the revel's pride
Was one, the lady from the Danube-side.

* For the affecting story of the Princess Pauline Schwarzenberg, see Madam de Stael's L'Allemagne, vol. iii. p. 336.

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Pauline, the meekly bright!—though now no more
Her clear eye flash'd with youth's all tameless glee,
Yet something holier than its dayspring wore,
There in soft rest lay beautiful to see;
A charm with graver, tenderer sweetness fraught—
The blending of deep love and matron thought.

Through the gay throng she moved, serenely fair,
And such calm joy as fills a moonlight sky,
Sate on her brow, beneath its graceful hair,
As her young daughter in the dance went by,
With the fleet step of one that yet hath known
Smiles and kind voices in this world alone.

Lurk'd there no secret boding in her breast?
Did no faint whisper warn of evil nigh?
—Such oft awake when most the heart seems blest
'Midst the light laughter of festivity:
Whence come those tones?—alas! enough we know,
To mingle fear with all triumphal show!

Who spoke of Evil, when young feet were flying
In fairy rings around the echoing hall,
Soft airs through braided locks in perfume sighing,
Glad pulses beating unto music's call?
—Silence! the minstrels pause—and hark! a sound;
A strange quick rustling which their notes had drown'd!

And lo! a light upon the dancers breaking—
Not such their clear and silvery lamps had shed!
From the gay dream of revelry awaking,
One moment holds them still in breathless dread;—
The wild fierce lustre grows—then bursts a cry—
Fire! through the hall and round it gathering—fly!

And forth they rush—as chased by sword and spear—
To the green coverts of the garden-bowers;
A gorgeous masque of pageantry and fear,
Startling the birds and trampling down the flowers:
While from the dome behind, red sparkles driven
Pierce the dark stillness of the midnight Heaven.

And where is she, Pauline?—the hurrying throng
Have swept her onward, as a stormy blast
Might sweep some faint o'erwearied bird along,—
—'Till now the threshold of that Death is past,
And free she stands beneath the starry skies,
Calling her child—but no sweet voice replies.

"Bertha! where art thou?—speak, oh! speak, my own!"—
—Alas! unconscious of her pangs the while,
The gentle girl, in fear's cold grasp alone,
Powerless hath sunk amidst the blazing pile;
A young bright form, deck'd gloriously for Death,
With flowers all shrinking at the flame's fierce breath!

But oh! thy strength, deep Love!—there is no power
To stay the mother from that rolling grave,
Though fast on high the fiery volumes tower,
And forth, like banners, from each lattice wave.
Back, back she rushes through a host combined—
Mighty is anguish, with affection twined!

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days had now elapsed since the visit of Lieutenant Harrison, when the situation of the sufferers had become irksome to a degree. Not once during that period had they been permitted to throw off their clothes, or perform their customary partial ablutions; and when they descended to the court, which was rarely and but for an instant, a sentinel followed with his bayonet extended, and within a foot of the prisoner. Their hands and wrists had also become extremely swollen by the compression of the irons, and the extremities of the fingers of several were discoloured with the quantity of blood propelled to those parts. Under these circumstances, I wrote a polite note to Colonel Campbell, detailing the several inconveniences sustained by my brother officers, and requesting that he would cause the fetters to be removed under the inspection of an officer, and merely for the time requisite to clean their persons and change their linen. To this communication I received a negative reply, couched in the most positive and unfeeling terms. I immediately wrote a second, expressive of our united sentiments in respect to his conduct, which I had no doubt would have brought down the wrath of the generous commandant on my head; but no notice whatever was taken of the letter. Finding it vain to expect any relief from this quarter, we adopted an expedient which answered all the intention proposed. With an old knife, we contrived to divide the nails by which the irons were riveted around the wrists, and substitute others of lead, a small quantity of which article one of the naval officers happened to have in his havresack. The relief afforded by the removal of the fetters, which was only effected by stealth, and at those moments when we considered ourselves free from interruption, was grateful to all, though the fingers were so much cramped by the extended position in which they had been kept, as to render it difficult and painful to move them. The leaden pins had been blackened to imitate iron, and as the sleeves were carefully drawn over the wrists, the deception could only be discovered on a minute examination. Thus were the officers enabled not only to enjoy some little cessation from suffering, but to attend to the comfort and cleanliness of their persons, an advantage for which they certainly were not much indebted to the humanity of the public authorities of Chilicothe.

BREATHINGS OF SPRING.

What wak'st thou, Spring?—sweet voices in the woods,
And reed-like echoes, that have long been mute;
Thou bringest back, to fill the solitudes,
The lark's clear pipe, the cuckoo's viewless flute,
Whose tone seems breathing mournfulness or glee,
Ev'n as our hearts may be.

And the leaves greet thee, Spring!—the joyous leaves,
Whose tremblings gladden many a copse and glade,
Where each young spray a rosy flush receives,
When thy south-wind hath pierced the whispery shade,
And happy murmurs, running through the grass,
Tell that thy footsteps pass.

And the bright waters—they too hear thy call—
Spring, the Awakener! thou hast burst their sleep;
Amidst the hollows of the rocks their fall
Makes melody, and in the forests deep,
Where sudden sparkles and blue gleams betray
Their windings to the day.

And flowers—the fairy-peopled world of flowers!
Thou from the dust hast set that glory free,
Colouring the cowslip with the sunny hours
And pencilling the wood-anemone;
Silent they seem—yet each to thoughtful eye
Glows with mute poesy.

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But what awak'st thou in the *heart*, O Spring?
The human heart with all its dreams and sighs?
Thou that giv'st back so many a buried thing,
Restorer of forgotten harmonies!
Fresh songs and scents break forth, where'er thou art—
What wak'st thou in the heart?

Too much, oh! there too much!—We know not well
Wherefore it should be thus, yet roused by thee,
What fond strange yearnings, from the soul's deep cell,
Gush for the faces we no more shall see!
How are we haunted, in thy wind's low tone,
By voices that are gone!

Looks of familiar love, that never more,
Never on earth, our aching eyes shall meet,
Past words of welcome to our household door,
And vanish'd smiles, and sounds of parted feet—
Spring! midst the murmurs of thy flowering trees,
Why, why reviv'st thou these?

Vain longings for the Dead!—why come they back
With thy young birds, and leaves, and living blooms?
—Oh! is it not, that from thine earthly track,
Hope to thy world may look beyond the tombs?
Yes! gentle Spring; no sorrow dims thine air,
Breathed by our loved ones *there!*

F. H.

A NARRATIVE OF AN ASCENT TO THE SUMMIT OF MONT BLANC,

By H. H. Jackson, Esq., Sept. 4, 1823.

[Allusion having been made in one of our former numbers to Mr. Jackson's ascent of Mont Blanc in 1823, that gentleman has kindly favoured us with the following account of his hazardous undertaking.]

Having left Geneva without the least intention of attempting the ascent of Mont Blanc this year (1823) owing to the lateness of the season, I was totally unprepared for it, in every way but that of having been much in the habit of walking. My dress consisted merely of nankeen trowsers, and a jacket of the same materials. I had a knapsack with me, containing linen and other necessaries, sufficient for any pedestrian enterprise less arduous than the ascent of Mont Blanc. On my arrival at Chamouni, I heard such a favourable report of the state of the snow upon Mr. Greenwood's attempt about three weeks before, that I thought it advisable to avail myself of the present favourable opportunity for accomplishing my object, rather than wait for the next year, when the difficulty of passing the glacier might be much increased. For this reason alone I resolved to make the attempt now; and as the season was rapidly advancing, I was anxious not to lose a moment more than was necessary to make my arrangements. I had debated a short time in my own mind, whether I should wait the result of the new moon, which would take place on the 4th, and which frequently has an effect on the weather; or whether I should start immediately and take my chance. I decided on the latter course;

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and perhaps unfortunately, as I should have had a much finer day to have gained the summit and enjoyed the prospect from it, had I deferred my departure for twenty-four hours.

Having determined, however, to make the attempt immediately, the first thing to be done was to procure the best guides. I wished very much to have had some of those who accompanied Mr. Clissold in his ascent last year; particularly Marie Coutet, who has generally been the leader in these expeditions. But it so happened, that not only Marie Coutet, but every other of them was engaged out of Chamouni. However, though I failed in getting exactly the guides I wished to have had, I must say, in justice to those whom I did employ, that I have no reason to find fault with one of them; and that I could not have been better provided, if I had had the choice of all the guides of Chamouni. Their names were:

1. Alexis Desouassous, aged 29, who had been to the summit twice before, and had made several other attempts, the last of which was that with a party in 1820, which was fatal to three guides; he was not present when the accident happened, having returned to Chamouni from the Grands Mulets with one of the party who refused to proceed. This man was generally my captain; to cut holes in the ice, prepare the road, and prove the strength of the bridges.
2. Joseph Charlet, aged 47 years, was the next. He had been to the summit, but not lately. He had accompanied Mr. Greenwood in his late unsuccessful attempt.
3. Anselm Trouchet, aged 38; commonly called Trouchet le Grand.
4. Jean Pierre Tairraz the younger, aged 37.
5. Simon Desouassous, cousin to Alexis, aged 27.

These three last had never been to the summit. My agreement with them was this: If we reached the summit, they were each to have sixty francs. If we only succeeded in getting as far as Mr. Greenwood had done, which was within about three hours of the summit, they were to have forty-five francs; and if we should be unable to ascend higher than the Grands Mulets, they were to have only thirty francs. This agreement was, I think, fair enough, considering they must be occupied at least two days, and possibly three; besides which there certainly was a chance, however small, of their losing their lives, and leaving their families bereft of every resource. Upon my return I made each of them a present of an additional five-franc piece, with which they were all perfectly content.

Having engaged guides, the next thing to be done was to procure clothes somewhat more substantial than those I had lately worn. With these M. Charlet, the master of the Union hotel, was so good as to accommodate me. He produced a pair of thick cloth trowsers, a double-breasted woollen waistcoat, with long sleeves, to wear over my shirt; a sort of spencer made of the strongest cloth, which served as a surtout; two pair of very thick woollen stockings, which are quite indispensable, one being required for walking, and another for sleeping; and a pair of cloth gaiters, which are also indispensable to button over the trowsers. With shoes I was provided. It is necessary to have one very strong pair, studded with large nails, particularly at the heels;

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and another dry pair to put on at night. Two pair of very warm gloves are also quite necessary; because those worn in the day generally get wet, and would be uncomfortable at night. A pair of green spectacles and a green veil are also highly needful.

We took with us provisions for three days, consisting of bread, meat, cold fowls, cheese, butter, wine, brandy, vinegar, &c. and this in pretty good abundance for six men in high health and vigour. Other articles necessary to be taken were, two blankets, a long sheet for a tent, a saucepan to dissolve the snow for water, ropes about fifteen feet long, to secure each other in passing dangerous places; a hatchet for cutting steps in the ice and frozen snow; and for each of us a pole about six feet in length, with a spike in the end. It is unnecessary to take any kind of fuel, as a sufficient quantity of dry wood to make a fire may be picked up before crossing the glacier. I much regret I was not able to procure in the village either thermometer or barometer; Marie Coutet was the only person who possessed any thing of the kind unbroken, and he was not returned. I made enquiry of every other person without success; and was therefore obliged to ascend without either.

Having made my arrangements, I desired my guides to be in readiness to set off the following morning at five o'clock, if the weather should be favourable. Accordingly at five in the morning, Sept. 3d, they were all assembled; but the weather, which had been very fine the preceding day, had somewhat changed during the night; and we began to be rather alarmed. The wind had shifted to the south-west; the atmosphere was much warmer than it had been for some days past, which the guides considered by no means a favourable circumstance. The tops of the lower mountains were entirely obscured, though the summit of Mont Blanc still remained tolerably clear. But what still gave me hopes was that the barometer had remained quite steady. For some time we were in a state of suspense, not knowing whether to venture or not. At length we resolved to wait till eight o'clock, as we should even then have time to reach the Grands Mulets before night.

Soon after seven the clouds began to disperse. I met Balma, surnamed the Mont Blanc, upon the bridge; and after a little conversation with him, I saw he was rather inclined towards our starting, though he did not venture directly to advise it. I took the hint, and immediately summoned my guides, who were instantly on the alert.

It was at a quarter before eight that I left Chamouni with my five guides, and two or three other persons, whom the guides had procured to carry their knapsacks to the foot of Aiguille de Midi, in order to be in full force to pass the glacier. Having given myself an entire rest the preceding day, I felt particularly strong and well; and as far as these two points were concerned, I promised myself success. The weather continued to improve a little, though there was still a heavy mass of clouds hanging over Mont Joli in the south-west.

We traversed the valley for the distance of half a league; when, arriving at the foot of the Pine Forest, we began to ascend with a slow and regular step. In about half an hour we passed Favret's cottage; near which we sat down for a few minutes; though I confess that for myself such was my eagerness for advancing, that it was never without reluctance that I could prevail upon myself to tarry more than a second

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or two to take breath. As we gradually emerged from the forest, the ascent became more steep and troublesome. At length we found ourselves upon a narrow path, which conducted us along the side of a hill in many parts extremely precipitous and rugged, and by no means a bad preparatory trial of our nerves—in one place particularly, where it was necessary to clamber over a rock, a fall from which would have precipitated me down a steep declivity of several hundred feet.

Our route by no means improved as we advanced, leading over loose stones and fragments of rock, which were continually falling from the aiguilles above. At half-past eleven we arrived at a rock near the base of the Aiguille de Midi, where we seated ourselves and partook of some of our refreshments; filling our saucepan with water from a neighbouring torrent. We rested half an hour; when having made a hearty repast, and the guides having dismissed their assistants, we proceeded on our march; and in a quarter of an hour gained the edge of the Glacier of Bosson. These enormous crevices seemed to interrupt our course in every direction. Alexis Desouassous went first; ascended a tower of ice to reconnoitre the route, and in a short time hailed us, having found a passage. We followed; our leader having previously cut steps in the ice with his axe. Although at the first appearance of the Glacier, to an eye unaccustomed to such a sight, it appeared totally impassable by any human being; still by good guidance, stepping over some of the crevices in places where the width of them would allow of our doing so, and avoiding others by making a little deviation from the direct line of ascent, we soon found ourselves considerably advanced without having encountered any very alarming difficulty: though several times the least false step, or a slip, might have precipitated us perhaps some hundreds of feet into the icy regions below. The width of the larger crevices is generally from about four to eight feet, though sometimes much wider: the depth of them varies from about forty to perhaps five or six hundred feet. The spaces between the crevices are extremely uneven, and in some parts slippery. As we advanced towards the centre of the Glacier, our difficulties rather diminished: the spaces between the crevices became more level, and covered with hardened snow; so that for some time we proceeded very leisurely. About one o'clock we were surprised by a violent storm of hail and rain, and were enveloped in a thick *brouillard*. By the time we were nearly wet to the skin, we found shelter under a beautiful grotto formed in the side of a huge mass of blue ice, which rose from twelve to fifteen feet above our heads, and was capable of containing several persons. Here we remained about a quarter of an hour; when the rain ceasing, and the clouds in some measure dispersing, we proceeded on our journey. We now found ourselves approaching the Grands Mulets; but had still some difficulties to encounter before we reached that point. The crevices opened wider than any we had seen; our route became more irregular; lying in some places under a terrific precipice of ice, which threatened every instant to fall on our heads. Sometimes we had to scramble about among masses of ice of various shapes, which had lately fallen from the still impending cliffs. The rope was tied round me, as a precaution against the consequence of an accidental slip. The axe was in continual requisition for some time, chopping holes for our feet. But the great point was always to have our poles firmly

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planted in the ice before we moved a foot;—this was of great assistance. The crampons I had not yet made use of; as where the ice is very compact, which is the case in some places, they are rather inconvenient; but I found the large nails in the heels of my shoes of very essential service. At length we arrived at an expanse of snow, which led us to the edge of an immense crevice, at least ten feet wide, and to all appearance unfathomable. Over this we fortunately found a pretty substantial bridge of snow, about four feet wide, and two or three thick in the smallest part. Had it not been for this bridge, we should probably have experienced much difficulty in proceeding; and perhaps should have been obliged to have made a long circuit to avoid it. We had traced Mr. Greenwood's route in several places—the snow not having yet entirely effaced it,—particularly across this bridge. In about ten minutes more we arrived at the foot of the Grands Mulets.

The Grands Mulets (so called from the resemblance they are said at a distance to bear to mules following each other up a mountain) are a line of irregular rocks dividing the upper extremity of the Glacier of Bosson from the Glacier of Taconnay. The highest point was nearly three hundred feet from the surface of the Glacier. They are in some parts too precipitous for the snow to lie on them; though near the summit, and upon the western declivity, there is a great quantity of snow, which never melts. The ascent is by no means easy, and to any person subject to giddiness in the head would be dangerous, as you have sometimes to clamber round their steep sides, where you can find no footing but the sharp edge of some piece of rock; whilst below you is a precipice of eighty or a hundred feet. My guides were anxious to fasten the rope round me; but as I had enough confidence in my own dexterity to proceed without fear, I preferred going alone.

At a quarter after three, we arrived at the usual resting-place. The weather had now somewhat improved; the sun shone bright, and the reflection of it from the snow beneath was excessively powerful. The clouds had nearly dispersed, and I hoped to have seen the sun set with a promise of a fine day on the morrow. Our first occupation now was to take off our shirts, and to dry them on the rocks, and to put on a dry pair of shoes and stockings. The guides then indulged themselves with a salutary nap, with their hats over their faces; whilst I, seated on a rock, with a pencil and paper in my hand, took down the adventures of the day. As the evening advanced, we began to make arrangements for the night. Our resting-place was upon a tolerably level spot, about four feet wide and eight long. Above us was a rock, nearly perpendicular, which sheltered us from the north wind, though it did not project at all to protect us from the rain. Below us was a steep precipice; but to obviate the danger of falling down it, former adventurers have piled up a wall of stones about a foot high; on the top of which is laid a ladder, which has sometimes been made use of, in order to pass the crevices of the Glacier. From this ladder, against the face of the rock, which formed the back of our rude habitation, we fixed our poles in a sloping direction, at a little distance from each other, and over them we spread a sheet which we had brought for this purpose. Such was our tent; and here we proposed to spend the night. Upon the stones which formed our floor we laid down an old blanket, which served for our bed; and we had another blanket to

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throw over us. I cannot say much for the comfort of our lodging. It was not long enough for us all to lie at full length, neither was it wide enough to admit of our lying across. But we were obliged to make the best of the space we had; for no place more roomy could be found. There are indeed two other spots occasionally occupied in the same way, but they were even less convenient than ours. One in which Saussure passed the night, was certainly inferior to it. About six o'clock we took our supper, to which I may safely say we all did justice, in spite of a storm of snow and rain which was beating against our tent, and threatening to deprive us of every hope of reaching the summit. I resolved, however, if there was no possibility of proceeding the next morning, to remain till the following day, which our stock of provisions would allow us to have done. But in less than half an hour our fears were dissipated by the cessation of the storm; and shortly afterwards one of the guides who had sallied forth to make observation, returned with the joyful tidings of a bright star-light night.

Towards nine o'clock we all endeavoured to sleep. My attempts were in vain; those of my guides were, I believe, more successful. Between twelve and one I began to feel restless and wearied of my bed: my mouth and throat were parched with thirst, which the wine rather increased than relieved; and our stock of water was exhausted. Alexis Desouassous went out, and with some pieces of wood which we had collected before we passed the Glacier, made a fire and dissolved in the saucepan some snow, the water of which I drank plentifully. During the night we continually heard the avalanches pouring down upon the Glacier of Bosson, with a tremendous noise, like that of a long peal of thunder: and more than once I congratulated myself upon being far out of their reach.

At daybreak we began to make preparation for our departure; the weather was fine, and the sky clear overhead, but a thick *brouillard* hung over the valley of Chamouni, which the guides considered a favourable circumstance. Our tent had frozen during the night; but our quarters were too confined to allow of our suffering from the cold. We merely put up what provisions were necessary till our return; consisting of a breakfast, some wine, brandy, and vinegar. At five we commenced our march, Alexis having started a little before us to chop holes in the snow, which we found quite hard and slippery. As soon as we were off the rock, I put on my crampons. The crampon is made of two pieces of iron crossing each other. One is about the breadth of the foot, the other somewhat longer. The four extremities of these irons are turned down, forming short spikes. These tie under the foot, and can be taken off or put on as occasion may require. I found them of so much service upon the hard snow, that I could walk upon any part of it without the least difficulty. I had no occasion even to make use of the holes which had been cut with the hatchet. The first part of our ascent was not steep: we proceeded nearly in a straight direction, afterwards skirting along the base of the Dome de Goutet. The crevices here are of a prodigious width, much wider than those of the Glacier; but we had no occasion to attempt a passage of any one of them; and for three hours we proceeded without having encountered the least difficulty. I once accidentally dropped my pole; and before we could any of us stop it, it had slid down into

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a crevice; fortunately, however, it was not a very deep one. Alexis recovered it for me, but not without some trouble; being obliged, at the risk of his life, to descend some distance into the crevice for it. The sun was now beginning to top the summits of the Aiguilles, and the ramparts of snow with which we were nearly surrounded, were suddenly illuminated with an indescribable brilliancy. At eight, we arrived almost at the extremity of an extensive plain of snow, called the Grand Plateau. Here we sat down and partook of our provisions under a large block of snow, which had been precipitated some time since from the neighbouring heights. I had not much appetite; but contrived to eat some of our cold fowl, with some bread. The heat of the sun was excessive; and I found the green spectacles and veil of the greatest possible service, not only against the glare of the snow, but also against a cutting wind which blew at intervals with great violence. We observed upon the summit, which was then free from clouds, several whirlwinds of snow, which had precisely the appearance of so many smoking chimneys. When asked what these phenomena were, old Charlet's exclamation, "Ma foi! quel orage!" certainly implied some degree of alarm, and, I confess, excited in my mind doubts of our ultimate success. As we sat at our breakfast, the loose snow which had fallen the preceding evening, once or twice drifted against us; *salting* our bread and meat rather more than we desired. It was here I first felt the symptoms of a head-ache; which increased as I advanced towards the summit. The guides told me it was no unusual sensation, and that they were frequently affected with it themselves more or less.

After resting about twenty minutes, we again proceeded, almost in a direct line for the Rocher Rouge. This is by far the most dangerous part of the ascent of Mont Blanc. The route lies immediately under a precipice of ice and snow, at the extremity of the Plateau. Here immense avalanches are continually falling. For the space of a quarter of an hour, our path led us over loose fragments of ice which seemed to have fallen but very recently. We made the best of our way across this part; marching the whole distance with a quick step. It unfortunately happened, that just at this spot one of my crampons came off. I endeavoured to stop a moment to put it right; but the guides urged me to get on as fast as possible; so that for some distance I was obliged to scramble along without it. Our exertions were not a little quickened by the reflection that near us was the spot where the dreadful accident occurred three years ago. An avalanche, or rather a separation of the snow suddenly took place; and the whole of the party were overwhelmed. Three of the poor guides, driven into a prodigious crevice, were never more heard of;—the rest of the party by degrees found their way out unhurt. I was so fortunate as to meet the gentleman who was the principal of the party at Chamouni before my ascent. He described to me exactly how the accident happened; and I believe it may in great measure, if not entirely, be attributed to the imprudence of Marie Coutet, who, although he was aware of the danger they had to encounter, still agreed to hazard it, without disclosing its extent to those of the party who were ignorant of it. An account of this accident was published in the New Monthly Magazine for 1821, Nos. April and May. The fatal crevice is now filled up with snow, and scarcely any traces of it are visible.

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The ascent now became extremely steep; so much so that we were obliged to take our poles quite short in the hand to be of any service to us. The snow was in most parts tolerably hard, excepting in a few places, where we found some drifts nearly knee-deep. The guides relieved each other in cutting the steps in a zig-zag direction;—an operation which is attended with a great deal of fatigue. The rope was here fastened about me; the guide who preceded me held one end of it; and the other was held by a guide behind me. From the steepness of the ascent, and the labour of cutting the steps, our progress was now very slow; stopping, as we did, to take breath every ten or fifteen paces.

In an hour and three quarters since our departure from the Grand Plateau, we reached the Rocher Rouge; a rock upon the north-eastern side of the mountain, about one thousand feet from the summit, and looking towards the valley of Chamouni. It was on the summit of this rock that Mr. Clissold and his party slept in their ascent last year. At this point we were almost immediately assailed by a piercing wind; forewarning us a little of what we had to expect on the summit; which, since our departure from the Grand Plateau, had become clouded, and was scarcely perceptible. We rested for a few minutes, seating ourselves across our poles which we had driven firmly into the snow. Some vinegar and water, with a small quantity of lemon juice, (a bottle or two of which we had mixed and brought with us from the Grands Mulets,) I found a pleasant beverage, assuaging my extreme thirst. In another quarter of an hour we arrived at some rocks, called les Derniers Rochers, being the last before reaching the summit. These rocks are of the hardest granite; and the grain of a small specimen I brought away, is, I think, the finest I ever saw.

Joseph Charlet was much fatigued; he sat down upon the rocks, and, had it not been for Alexis Desouassous, would in all probability have fallen asleep. I waited here only a few minutes, when, leaving these two men to take care of each other, I proceeded upon my march with my three other guides, who were as anxious for success as I was myself. I thought, perhaps, the other two might have followed us; and, indeed, they did once make an attempt; I happened about a quarter of an hour afterwards to look behind me, and saw them slowly crawling up; but either from indifference about it, over-fatigue, or fear of the hurricane, they thought proper to return. Alexis awaited our descent at les Derniers Rochers; but old Charlet thought it was as well to descend altogether; and I saw nothing more of him till we were again on le Grand Plateau. If the reason for their remaining behind was indifference about ascending farther, they were wise not to accompany us, for all our dangers were now over; there were no crevices or difficulties by which we could possibly be stopped. The only thing we had now to encounter was the labour; and as I was quite able to take care of myself, and did not stand in need of any assistance, there was no necessity for their going farther if they were not inclined to do so. In regard to old Charlet, I must confess I think, from what Desouassous told me, that he was excessively fatigued; and I doubt whether he had it in his power to proceed, although he afterwards assured me to the contrary. Perhaps it would be hardly fair to attribute their staying behind to fear of the hurricane; because, though

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the wind was violent, and therefore doubled the labour of ascent, I do not think there was much danger to be apprehended from it.

The snow now became so very compact and hard, that the crampons, particularly when we approached the summit, scarcely made any impression. I was obliged to proceed very slowly in a zig-zag direction; and I found that the greatest number of steps I could possibly take without stopping to draw breath, was fifteen; and this with great difficulty; generally halting after every eight or ten. The difficulty of respiration arising from the rarefaction of the air, was no doubt much increased by the violence of the wind; for even in ascending a very inferior mountain, I have continually felt, when the wind has been high, the very same sensation, although of course in a much less degree. I now experienced a kind of faintness, hung down my head, and panted for breath; the summit seeming to recede as I advanced;—my headache had much increased, with a slight bleeding of the nose. A guide perceiving that I was somewhat distressed, thought it necessary to support me with his arms; but I very quietly told him I could dispense with his assistance,—"only let me take my time."* Once or twice the mist for a few minutes cleared away a little; I turned round, and beheld a prodigious extent of mountainous country, but could distinguish nothing. After toiling on in this way for some time, I at length saw two of my guides lying down under a ridge of snow; I made towards them, and was agreeably surprised, when I reached them, to find myself at the top of Mont Blanc.

It was now exactly noon; and we had been seven hours ascending from the Grands Mulets. I say I was surprised, for not having ventured to look up for some time, I little thought I had made so much progress. I threw myself on the snow with my guides, and we congratulated each other, with a hearty shake of the hand, on the success of our enterprise. And here I may observe, that I do not pretend to claim any merit, but for the boldness of the undertaking. I did not ascend for any scientific purpose; since every such purpose had already been sufficiently attained by those who had preceded me. Neither had I set my heart on an extensive prospect, which from obvious reasons must in such a situation be always uncertain. Had either of these motives been the sole object of my ascent, I should of course have experienced much disappointment. From a love of hardy enterprise, natural to, and I trust excusable in a young man, I had determined to ascend Mont Blanc,—chiefly, perhaps, because the attempt was one of acknowledged danger and difficulty; and the succeeding in it would be rewarded with that pleasing recollection which always attends successful boldness. I gained my object; I stood on the top of Mont Blanc, and I was perfectly satisfied.

The violence of the wind was now beyond any thing I ever experienced. After resting a few minutes to recover my breath, I got up, and with the assistance of one of my guides, mounted the ridge under which we had been lying. This ridge or bank, formed by

* In the New Monthly Magazine, (Vol. XVI. p. 600.) in an account given of the ascent of Dr. E. Clark, one of the guides is stated to have said, "It was here Mr. Jackson stopt; and falling into the arms of one of his guides, exclaimed, 'Leave me here!—I can do no more!'" This is incorrect; the circumstance was exactly as I have above related it.

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the drifting of the now, was, where we were standing, about three or four feet in breadth, and at the other extremity somewhat wider. I did not take the trouble to walk the whole length of it, neither can I give a just idea of its extent. Here we were on the very highest point; clinging to each other, and exerting our very utmost strength to maintain ourselves on our legs, which we succeeded in doing for a minute or two. The damp mist, which was continually settling and freezing on our clothes, produced the most intense cold; and we were nearly blinded by the drifting of small particles of snow which had fallen the preceding evening. I regret I had not a thermometer with me to ascertain the degree of cold: all I can say is, that, in spite of the labour of the ascent, and the consequent temporary perspiration which it ought to have excited, I never felt any thing at all equal to it in the coldest day in winter; and I doubt whether it would have been possible to have existed there for any length of time. All that I could see was a confused heap of mountains in the direction of the Shreckhorn and Jung Frau. Mont Rosa in the east was particularly conspicuous; and some part of Piedmont was visible at intervals. On the opposite side every thing was totally obscured. As the inducements to remain on the summit were not very great, we commenced our descent, after having been there about ten minutes. My spectacles had become so dim that I was obliged to take them off in order to see where to place my feet; and my veil being rendered unserviceable by the wind, I was obliged to dispense with that also. Thus I had to bear the unmitigated violence of the snow and mist, driving for some time directly in my face.

The descent is not unpleasant: by leaning back on our poles, which we pressed hard upon the snow, and suffering our feet to go, we came down with great rapidity. In less than twenty minutes we found ourselves at the Rocher Rouge, the ascent from which had occupied us upwards of an hour. We were joined at les Derniers Rochers by Alexis Desouassous; but old Charlet had departed. The descent to the Grand Plateau was more dangerous, though not so fatiguing as the ascent, which is generally the case where the declivity is very steep; particularly upon snow, which will sometimes slip from under the feet. We were obliged to proceed very slowly and with great caution, taking care to have a firm bearing upon our poles. The large nails in the heels of the shoes we found here very useful; more so than the crampons; as much depends upon throwing the heel well back into the snow. We discovered two crevices in our descent concealed by the snow: they were neither of them so wide but that we could step across them; though, had they not been detected, a broken leg might probably have been the consequence. A little before two we arrived at the Grand Plateau. We stopt for about ten minutes. I drank a glass of vinegar and water; but felt no inclination to eat. My headache had much increased, owing to the sudden transition from the extreme cold upon the summit to the comparative closeness of the air on the Plateau, where we were more sheltered from the wind, and exposed to a hot sun. From thence to the Grands Mulets we proceeded without much difficulty; and generally pretty fast, wherever the snow would admit of our sliding without danger of crevices. In approaching the Grands Mulets we came to two huge crevices, lying at right angles, but sepa-

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rated from each other by a narrow wall of snow, over which we had to walk for the distance of several paces, flanked on each side by a chasm truly terrific. Soon after three we arrived at the spot where we had slept the preceding night. The guides regaled themselves with the remainder of the provisions; a pleasure in which I was not able to share with them, any farther than by partaking of some of the wine, which I was also obliged to drink unmixed, as our means for procuring water were exhausted. We took our departure from hence in about a quarter of an hour. The descent of the Grands Mulets is much more troublesome and fatiguing than the ascent; the rocks are so very precipitous in some parts, that it requires the greatest possible care and attention in descending them. The rope was again tied round my waist, and was held by two guides behind me. In several places, had I not been preceded by a guide, I should have thought it impossible to have descended; and from the difficulties we got into, I think we must have deviated rather from the usual route. At length we arrived safe at the base of the rock, and had now to repass the glacier. We crossed the principal crevice by the same bridge as before, which we fortunately found still substantial. After this we experienced no very great obstruction. Our route was uneven: we had to pass many crevices, which, with the assistance of my guides, I effected without much difficulty. The hatchet was generally employed in cutting holes in the ice and snow, which, by being exposed to the sun throughout the day, were become slippery. In crossing a bar of snow sloping down towards a crevice, both my feet slipped from under me at the same moment: I fell; and after sliding the distance of several paces, found myself upon the very brink of the crevice, my legs hanging over. The guides, who were behind me, immediately checked my progress by the rope, which was still attached to me; and Alexis Desouassous, who had preceded me, stretching out his pole to me, I was soon relieved from this very critical situation. The depth of the crevice I do not know; but I must have fallen at least thirty or forty feet, and perhaps much more. Soon after five we arrived upon terra firma, at the foot of the Aiguille de Midi, having got over all our danger. It was our intention to pass the night upon this spot, little thinking to reach it so early; but as we were only three hours from Chamouni, and had still two hours more of daylight, I thought it would be quite as well to get on to a comfortable bed at the inn, as to have another sleepless night upon a rock. My proposition to this effect was willingly acceded to by my guides, who exulted in the idea of being the first adventurers who had ever succeeded in making the ascent from the Grands Mulets, and the whole of the descent, upon the same day. After resting for a few minutes, we again proceeded upon our journey; but, as we were much fagged and our route very indifferent, our progress was proportionably slow. About seven we came within sight of old Favret's cottage; and as the night was now closing in, and our route was over a bad road through a dark gloomy pine forest, we struck a light for our candle, wrapping a piece of paper round it as a substitute for a lantern. At eight we beheld some faint glimmering lights, which greeted our approach to the village of Chamouni; and at a quarter after we arrived at the Union, after an absence of less than

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thirty-seven hours; the shortest time in which this expedition was ever performed.

I did not feel so excessively fatigued as I had expected to be: I was hot and feverish, had no appetite, and my mouth was parched with thirst, which I relieved with a little plain water; my head was somewhat better, and my nose had ceased bleeding. I did not go to bed immediately; and, indeed, so elated was I with my success, that I scarcely felt any inclination to do so. It was ten o'clock before I parted from Mr. Dornford, to whom I had been relating my adventures. He told me he had seen us to the summit of the Rocher Rouge; but that afterwards we disappeared in the mist. I slept soundly for nine hours, and the next morning awoke much refreshed. My face, particularly my nose and ears, were in a slight degree excoriated, and continued to peel off for some days afterwards. I found cream of use; and I have no doubt that by taking the precaution of besmearing the face with this before it is exposed to a cutting wind or a burning sun, the excoriation would be in a great measure prevented. Three of the guides were much affected in the eyes, from not having worn spectacles or veils; but I was not at all so; neither was old Charlet, from his having worn a light straw hat with a very broad brim.

I remained at Chamouni the two following days, exulting in my successful enterprise, and reached Geneva on the 7th.

The following is a correct list of the different persons who had stood on the top of Mont Blanc before I ascended :—

1. Dr. Paccard, and James Balma, a guide, Aug. 8, 1786.
2. M. Saussure, Aug. 3, 1787.
3. Col. Beaufoy, English, Aug. 9, 1787.
4. Mr. Woodley, English, Aug. 5, 1788.
5. Baron Doorthesen, Courland, and M. Forneret, Lausanne, Aug. 10, 1802.
6. M. Roday, Hamburgh, Sept. 10, 1812.
7. Count Mateyeski, Aug. 4, 1818.
8. Dr. Renselaen, Mr. Howard, Americans, July 12, 1819.
9. Capt. Undrell, R.N., English, Aug. 13, 1819.
10. Mr. Clissold, English, Aug. 20, 1822.
11. Mr. Jackson, English, Sept. 4, 1823.

TO THE FIRST OF MAY.

" Hard his herte that loveth nought
In May, when al this mirth is wrought."—*Chaucer.*

Hail, thou rosy May! with thy merry-dancing hours,
Thy eyes of "dewy light," and the fragrance of thy flowers,—
Hail, thou rosy May! for the wintry winds are past,
And thy primroses and cowslips have shown their hues at last.

To life's young hour of feeling the gales of Araby,
The odours of thy spicy breath in sweetness far outvie;
They come with gentle colloquy, and whisper every heart,
Of mysteries, joys, and thy bright sun, as if they ne'er could part.

Let Summer wear her flaunting garb and shoot her parching ray,
Her lip is not as fresh as thine, mine own dear sunny May!

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The star that gems thy radiant brow so sweet in lustre is,
It shines the beam of hope to earth, the herald of all bliss.

Thy pearls are flashing on the bough, the land is giving life,
The insect broods are swarming, and thy realm is free of strife,
The peacefulness of heaven's own reign is round thy flowery track,—
O pleasant this auspicious day that greets thy footsteps back!

The waters sparkle with delight, a buz is in the air,
The ocean-waves curl softer now, and man hath less of care,
The low wind scarcely moves the wood, or sighs the leaves between,
Lest it disturb earth's harmony among the branches green.

Thou kindliest month of all the year, pass not too fast away,
As hours enjoy'd are prone to do, for man is miserly
Of thy sweet presence, since to him thou art a boon indeed,
Slave as he ever is to gloom, in friendship, love, and creed.

Thou 'rt come, bright May! with passion's glance to flush the Virgin's cheek,
From feelings indefinable her tongue must never speak,
The sadness of affection's dawn is over her soft heart,
She sighs amid her solitude, and tears unbidden start—

She hears the mated bird's first song, when love is all the theme,—
Of thee, thou month of love, inquires, why she is not the same;
No songster comes to sing to her, and wile her hours away,
Cheering her wishing solitude with his congenial lay.

Welcome, thou rosy May! with thy merry-dancing hours,
Thy eyes of "dewy light," and the fragrance of thy flowers,—
Welcome, thou rosy May! for the wintry winds are past,
And thy primroses and cowslips have shown their hues at last!

WALKS IN ROME AND ITS ENVIRONS.—NO. VII.

Roman Society—the Princess Borghese, &c.

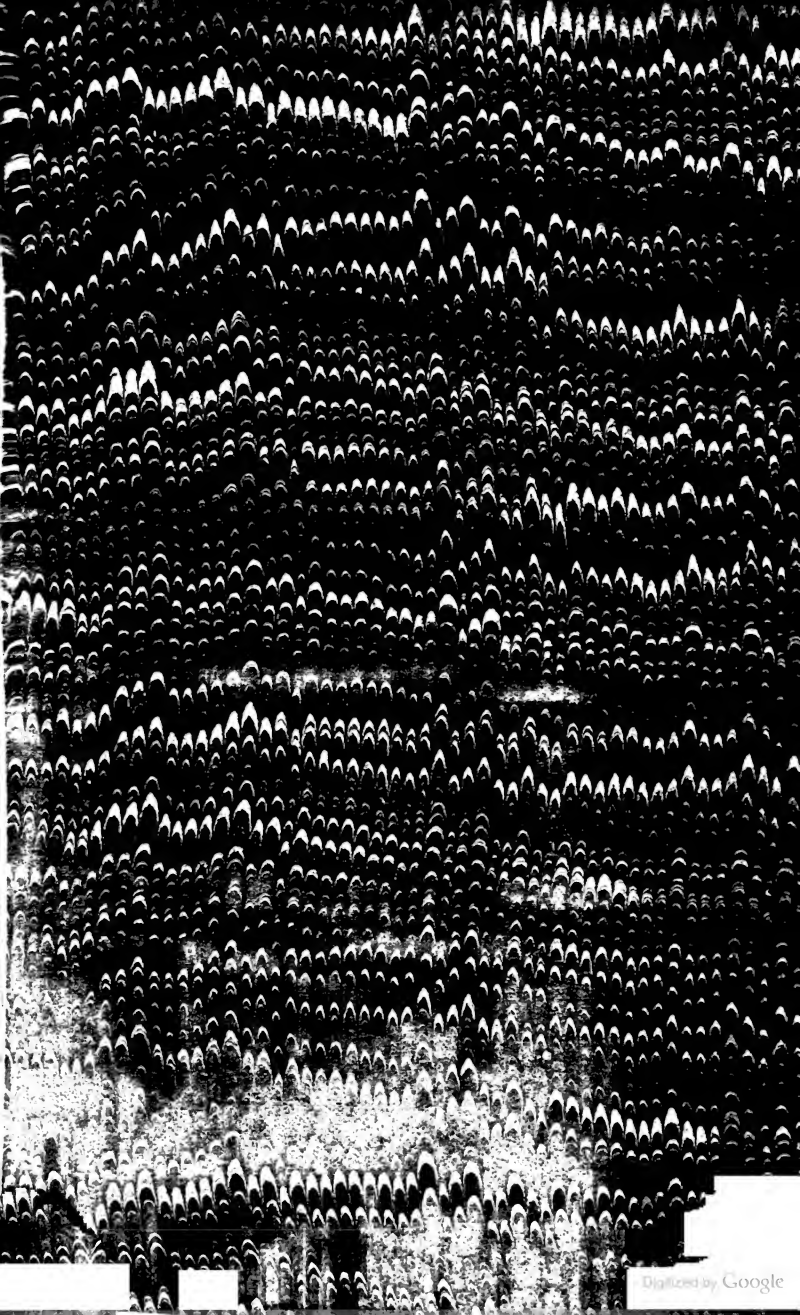
Ne le fù il cielo di bellezza avaro,
Nel volto giglio, e rosa le fioriva
Ed aggiunse ancor ch' aveva un dir preclaro,
Ed invaghiva ognuno che l'udia,
Tanto era pien di grazia e leggiadria,—
E ch'ella stava di presente in Roma,
Acclamata, aggradita. *Riciardetto*, Canto 5.

It was yet too early for dinner—for here every one dines either at two, or at the Ave Maria (sunset), and I thought I could not more agreeably fill up the interval than by presenting my letters to the Princess Borghese. I accordingly drove, on leaving Thorwaltzen's, to her palace near the Tyber, and in a few minutes found myself in the *Cortile*. The *Suisse*, or porter, a tall, bony, forbidding-looking person, in the exclusive service of the Prince, looked out at me as I entered, and without troubling himself with the answer to any of my questions allowed me quietly to pass on.

The Palazzo Borghese was once the most splendid at Rome. In the principal Casino of the celebrated Villa are still preserved several paintings illustrative of the series of masques, tournaments, processions, and other high festivities, of which it was formerly the scene. The Prince Borghese, though nearly two centuries have passed over his patent, is still considered a *novus homo*, and his family comparatively plebeian; but he possesses also the advantages of novelty, and contrasts in wealth, as well as origin, with most of the old Patricians of Rome. The Popes Paul V. (Borghese) and Cle-

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